











**THE HEROIC RECORD OF  
THE BRITISH NAVY**



# THE HEROIC RECORD *of the* BRITISH NAVY

*A Short History of  
the Naval War  
1914-1918*

BY  
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AND  
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To the generous help and criticisms of many participants in the events hereafter recorded, and particularly to Admirals Viscount Jellicoe of Scapa Flow and W. S. Sims of the United States Navy; to Vice-Admirals Sir F. Doveton Sturdee and Sir Reginald H. Bacon; and to Lieutenant-Commander A. D. Turnbull of the United States Navy, the authors desire to express their most grateful acknowledgment.



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## FOREWORD

**I**N THE years immediately preceding the Great War, already so hard to reconstruct, it was not uncommonly suggested that the British seafaring instinct had begun to decline. In our professional navy most thinkers had confidence, as in a splendid machine ably manned; but, as regarded the population as a whole, it was feared that modern industrialism was sapping the old sea-love. That this has been disproved we hope to make clear in the following pages—a first attempt, as we believe, to give, in narrative form, a reasonably complete and consecutive history of the naval war. We have indeed gone further, for we have tried to show not only that the spirit of admiralty has survived undiminished, but that we have witnessed such a re-awakening of it, both in Great Britain and America, as has had no parallel since the days of Elizabeth. We have also tried to make clear that, in a thousand embodiments, in men and boys fallen or still living, it has shone with a spiritual even more than any material significance; and that it has again declared itself to be the peculiar expression in world-affairs of the English-speaking races.

Nor was the little apparent interest shown, just before the war, in the navy and the navy's exercises very remarkable. Our attitude, as a people, toward

it had always been a curious union of apathy and adventure. We had been sea-worshippers so long that our reverence had often been dulled by much familiarity, and to such an extent, at times, that, only by the supremest efforts, had we, as a nation, escaped catastrophe. But if, on the one hand, we had lost the neophyte's fire, we had perhaps gained a little in tolerance. The seas had not found in us jealous masters. Our harbours and ships had been at the world's disposal. No empire in history had been so leisurely or less designedly built up, as none was to prove, perhaps, to have been so apparently loosely but yet so organically knit—probably because the idea of empire had always meant less to us than the growing idea of admiralty. Nor is that so obscure as it may at first seem, since, in spite of so much outward indifference, the call of the sea, as closer examination will show, was still among the most insistent to which we responded. There was scarcely a cottage, for instance, even in the remotest highlands, in which the picture of a ship did not hang upon the walls, or that had failed to send a son or a brother or a cousin to serve either in the navy or the mercantile marine. Even in the greyest and most smoke-laden of our central industrial cities, wherever there was a pond, the children sailed their little boats upon it; and, once a year, as to some lustral rite, the town-bred inhabitant took his family to the coast.

That these were indications of any racial significance the non-seagoing Briton had seldom, perhaps, realized. That, because of them, his language had become a familiar tongue in the uttermost parts of the

earth; that because of them every would-be world-tyrant, since Philip of Spain, had been frustrated; that because of them the freedom of nations, no less than that of individuals, had slowly become humanity's gospel—this had been as little present to him as to the inhabitant of Turnham Green that he was living in the greatest harbour of the world; and yet that it was so was but a matter of fact, and indeed the natural outcome of our origin. Since Britain had become an island every wave of invaders had necessarily come to it in ships and with experience of the sea. However various may have been their other contributions to the ultimate nation into which they were to be merged, this had been common to them. They had all been seamen, of whatever temperament or complexion; and, while of the earliest inhabitants of what are now the British Islands, no boat-lore can be definitely postulated, the discovery of the famous barge in the Carse of Stirling shows that, 3,000 years before Christ, there must have been some knowledge of navigation; while, of the first Celtic immigrants enough must be assumed, at any rate, to have enabled them successfully to cross the Channel.

Of these the Gaelic Celts, landing from Spain upon the coasts of Devon and Cornwall and in Ireland, seem to have been the pioneers, followed by a stronger invasion of Cymric Celts, who landed in Kent and Essex, and afterward drove the Gaels before them into the northern and western fastnesses. Of later Aryans, the first members of the great Teutonic family to land on these shores were, almost certainly, the Belgae, who settled on the south and east coasts;

while the Scillies and Cornwall appear to have been regularly visited by Phœnician traders and Greek merchants from Marseilles—a sea-borne commerce that continued for many years after the first Roman expedition.

This took place under Julius Cæsar, first in B. C. 55, and its ostensible purpose seems to prove the existence of some kind of pre-Roman British fleet—Cæsar's declared object being to punish the Britons for having sent assistance in ships and men to the Veneti, a kindred Celtic tribe, with which he was at war on the mainland. He appears to have encountered no opposition from it, however, for when he set sail from the coast of France, somewhere between the present ports of Calais and Boulogne, his fleet of war-galleys and transports crossed unchallenged, as far as the sea was concerned.

Achieving little more on his first visit than a demonstration of the power of Rome, on his return, a few months later, with 30,000 men, including cavalry, he penetrated deeply inland, although it was not until nearly a century later that Britain became definitely a Roman province; and it was not until the reign of Vespasian at Rome and his deputy Julius Agricola in Britain that Roman vessels for the first time circumnavigated Great Britain and Scotland. The father-in-law of Tacitus, and himself an extremely able and far-sighted administrator, it was by Agricola that the earliest definite foundations of what was to become the British nation may be said to have been laid. Securing the confidence of the islanders, he not only encouraged amongst them the absorption of Roman

culture, but protected them against any excess of official exploitation; and, although he was presently recalled by the Emperor Domitian, the principles of administration that he had laid down were generally adopted and developed by his successors in office—forming, in many respects, those of that greater empire whose foundations were already being laid.

It would be hard to exaggerate, indeed, the debt of the nations of British origin to the three and a half centuries of Roman rule, during which period the Christian religion was first preached in these islands. And, though it failed, if that had been its design, to create a strong and independent and self-governing colony—so that when the Roman power was finally withdrawn, owing to impending disasters at the core of the Empire, the Islanders became a prey, if not an easy one, to the next Saxon invaders—its legend of equity as between man and man, its perception and methods of development of natural resources, and its patient thoroughness of execution appealed to the minds and survived in the practice of every succeeding race of immigrants.

That together with these qualities and those to be infused with the next current of invasion there was a real love of the sea among this early population has sometimes been doubted; and Ruskin in one of his essays seems definitely to deny this, adducing Chaucer as an argument. In this great poet of a later period, the first representative voice of emerging England, he finds no expression of it and indeed a positive aversion from all that the sea and sea-travel stood for.



But whether or not that be the case, and though there were undoubtedly periods, notably just before the rise of Alfred, wherein the nation as a whole, if it may so be spoken of, had largely forgotten the importance of sea-power, each of the three great tribes, who had then overrun the land, had depended for their success upon their maritime skill.

Saxons and Jutes and Angles, they had all been coast-dwellers upon the Weser, the Elbe, and the Ems, the sea-banks between them, and the tongue of land dividing the Baltic from the North Sea; and, while a certain number of them had already become settlers in Britain, attracted by its prosperity under Roman rule, the majority had been pirates, with an established reputation as amongst the bravest and fiercest of ocean-adventurers. Bold as they were, however, and disorganized as the Romanized Britons had become, upon the withdrawal of the tutelage of their governors, it was nearly two centuries before Great Britain could be said to have become definitely Anglo-Saxon, and yet another two before the newcomers themselves had established any sort of unity; and already, by that time, fresh bodies of invaders had begun to make their presence felt.

These were the Wikings or Vikings, men of the Scandinavian fiords, racially allied with the original Saxon conquerors, but whose subsequent conversion both to Christianity and what seemed to them the tamer life of agriculture, they affected to regard with indignation, not unmixed with contempt. Carrying their arms into every known sea, and believed to have been the first discoverers of America, these Vikings

saw in Great Britain, with its increasing fertility, an ideal and convenient theatre of war.

As early as the later years of the eighth century, they were making sporadic raids upon the Northumbrian coast, and, in 832, they sailed up the Thames, ravaged the Isle of Sheppey, and escaped unscathed. A year later, they attacked the coast of Dorset, and, in 834, they joined the Cornish Celts, when they were defeated, however, by Egbert, King of Wessex—the first, in any real sense, King of England.

But this was little more than a local defeat, and almost every succeeding year saw further raids, until, in 855, a squadron actually entrenched in Sheppey and proceeded to spend the winter there—the first indication in the minds of the Northmen of serious ideas of invasion. From 866 to 870, they made attacks in such force and with such ferocity that, by the beginning of 871, the whole of England, north of the Thames, lay at their mercy; while, several years before this, permanent settlements of Danes had taken place in Ireland, the Shetland Islands, the Hebrides, and the Orkneys.

This was the situation when, at the age of twenty-two, Alfred, afterward to be called the Great, ascended to the throne. Nor could he well have become king at a less propitious moment. For, with the whole of the north and east now firmly in their grasp, the Danes were already pressing upon Wessex. A battle fought almost immediately after his accession to the throne was rather in the nature of a draw than a victory; and, although the enemy withdrew for a time, a few years later found Alfred at bay in the

marshes of West Somerset, with the Danes overrunning and apparently in secure possession of some of the most fertile parts of his kingdom.

Fortunately for his people, however, Alfred, for all his refinement, his love of culture, and cosmopolitan boyhood, had inherited in full measure the stubborn Saxon refusal to accept either slavery or defeat; and, a few months later, rallying to his standard an army of Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Somersetshire men, he inflicted upon the Danes, at the battle of Ethandun, the severest defeat that they had yet sustained. By the treaty of Wedmore in 878, he secured the integrity of the south and west, recognizing that, in the north and east, the Danish element was not only too strong to be expelled, but was already becoming welded, not wholly to its disadvantage, with the national life. He agreed, therefore, for his own part, to recognize the Danish influence upon the other side of Watling Street, at the same time persuading its representative leaders to forsake their paganism and embrace Christianity.

Against further aggression, however, from abroad, he determined at all costs to protect the Island; and he was the earliest of his line to realize that his country's first defense was the sea that washed its shores. Already, in 875, he had been the victor in Swanage Bay over a small but strong fleet of pirates; and, after the peace of Wedmore, he set himself to the serious construction and effective distribution of a fleet of war. With no lack of raw material, with good craftsmen, and with a maritime population needing nothing but initiative, he built a navy that, in respect of *per-*

*sonnel* no less than in technical equipment, soon out-classed that of the Danes. Distributed round the coast, he had, according to varying accounts, from 120 to 300 warships; and, behind this bulwark, for the next fifteen years, England achieved an almost miraculous degree of progress. In 896, after a considerable struggle, another attempted invasion was crushed, and Alfred's fleet, grown in strength and experience, extinguished the recurrence of piracy that had accompanied it. Merciful in character and tolerant in statesmanship, toward these pirates he showed no clemency, and, when he died in 901, he left a country prosperous and at peace and with its sea-boards inviolate.

To what extent his son and grandson, Edward the Elder and Athelstan, appreciated the full significance of sea-power we do not know; but it is interesting that Athelstan, during whose brilliant reign the Danish portions of England were largely reabsorbed, conferred the dignity of thane-ship upon any merchant who had made three voyages of length in his own trading vessel—thereby fostering, and even perhaps founding, the dynasty of those merchant-adventurers, upon whom in years to come, and on seas then unknown, Britain was to climb to a destiny beyond his imaginings. Nor can the work of Alfred and Athelstan, in these respects, be discounted because of the eclipse that followed in the reign of Ethelred, and that led to the passing of England, predominantly Saxon, under Danish sovereignty for a quarter of a century, and then, after a further period of twenty-four years, under the permanent rule of the Normans.

Tenacious of its rights, impossible to dragoon, there has always been a strain of inertia in the Saxon character—the reflex of that tolerance, perhaps, which has in so many respects been the secret of its influence throughout the world; and it was probably inevitable that there should have been phases in our national growth, and especially in its adolescence, when this should have seemed to be uppermost. To the minority Celt, with his quicker wits, this has often and justly been a subject of annoyance. In it the Normans, conscious in their persons of the latest current of oversea adventure, avid of culture, and contemptuous of ignorance, saw, and at once seized, their opportunity. For men of their enterprise, intellectual subtlety, and disciplined military energy, the prosperous island, with its clannish dissensions and lack of organization, seemed an obvious prey. And if, in the immediate moment, they were largely successful owing to the flank attack upon Harold by his brother Tostig, it was to a lack of vision, curiously Anglo-Saxon, that they were hardly less indebted for their victory.

Gathering for the defense of the realm, both by land and sea, the largest forces that had ever been collected in England, had William and his armies tied to land a month or two earlier they might well have done so in vain. But with August and September came the demands of the harvest, the autumn ploughing, and the neglected farms. As so often before and since in English history, the parochial and individual obscured the national. William had not come. Perhaps he would never come. The discontented soldiery



could not be kept together. The ships of the Fleet, or many of them, had to return for re-fitting, and, when on September 28th, William arrived at Pevensey, three days after Harold had defeated his brother at Stamford Bridge, it was to land unopposed both on shore and at sea. Moreover, there was yet another factor, and one also that was to recur again and again in English history—a failure, fresh from military victory, to appreciate the value of sea-power—that contributed not a little to Harold's defeat. By October 14th, the date of the Battle of Hastings, the English Fleet had again been mobilized, and held the Channel. Between their position in Sussex and their base in France, the Normans' connections had been cut; and, just as in later years it was Nelson's "storm-tossed ships upon which the Grand Army never looked" that stood between Napoleon and the dominion of the world, so might Harold's, had he trusted them more fully, have stood between William of Normandy and the conquest of England.

With William's forces dependent for their supplies upon the rapidly dwindling stores of the surrounding country; with that silent pressure behind him of England's naval power—there would have been time and plenty, had Harold been content to wait, for the English armies to have consolidated themselves in overwhelming strength. But it was not to be. Dazzled by his recent success, and thinking in terms of armies rather than navies, he forced the issue and was defeated, and England passed under Norman power; and yet so incompletely that there are few Englishmen of to-day who, on reading the story of the Battle

by right of its position and history, a wider destiny opening overseas. Fighting more stubbornly than ever against every attempt to make it an appanage of Europe, the eyes of England began to turn more and more constantly to those just-discovered realms with their incalculable future. In the imagination of the Celt, the organizing power of the Roman, the tenacity of the Saxon, the daring of the Norman, and in the sea-lore of them all, it seemed that Fate had been slowly forging a new instrument for the new task. It was only the realization of it that was to seek in the composite race that had thus been built up; and it is not too much to say, perhaps, that the loss of Calais was the right-about-turn that brought this about. Not Europe but the West was the new watchword. But the corollary to that was a new conception of the sea. It was no longer the means of defense, insulating Britain from her foes. It was the highway of her full and peculiar national expression. As never before and not often perhaps since, the sense of what admiralty meant flooded through the nation; and though, as in all the enterprises of human society, the motives in this one were no doubt mixed—though the desire for gold and the lust of fighting for fighting's sake were dominant in the minds of many of those sailors—it is equally clear that, for the best and finest of them, the idea of admiralty had a definite spiritual meaning.

As we gather from their letters and records, they had begun to realize in themselves the upholders and missionaries of a nobler life. They were in true succession to the best of those Norman knights, whose

spiritual contribution to England they had inherited; and, in admiralty, as they dreamed of it, we may trace the reincarnation, with a fuller and wider outlook, of that older chivalry.

These then were their objects, and the means was the navy, whose first foundations, as we now know it, had already been laid in the reign of Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII. Up to that time, though the Government had possessed the right, in times of war, to employ merchant shipping, there had been no definite navy, permanently established, in the modern sense of the word. In return for certain privileges, merchant ship-owners—and especially, in earlier days, those of the Cinque Ports—were under contract, on demand of the king, to supply a specified number of vessels, manned and equipped for war. It was with fleets so assembled that, in 1212, the English had raided Fécamp and prevented a French invasion; that, two years later, in a similar action under William Longsword, they had again destroyed the French Fleet; and that, in 1334, one of the greatest British naval victories had been won at Sluys over vastly superior numbers. And, though the Cinque Ports had, by this time, already dwindled from their earlier importance, similar arrangements were in force, when Henry VIII came to the throne, with the merchant shippers of Bristol, Plymouth, Newcastle, and many other quickly growing ports.

Under Henry VIII, however, we find coming into being the important Government dockyards of Portsmouth, Deptford, and Woolwich, and every provision made for the regular supply of the timber requisite

for their needs. The same reign witnessed the establishment of the Navy Office, out of which our present Admiralty has grown, and the granting of a charter to Trinity House—that corporation of “godly disposed men who, for the actual suppression of evil disposed persons bringing ships to destruction by the shewing forth of false beacons, do bind themselves together in the love of our Lord Christ, in the name of the Master and Fellows of the Trinity Guild, to succour from the dangers of the sea all who are beset upon the coasts of England, to feed them when a-hungred, to bind up their wounds, and to build and light proper beacons for the guidance of mariners.” And, although at the time of the Armada, as indeed ever since in moments of maritime urgency, a large bulk of the British Fleet consisted of transformed merchantmen belonging to private owners, the Elizabethan admirals found at their disposal the rudiments, at any rate, of a specialized navy.

How gloriously, and to what purpose, against what was then the greatest Power in the world, they used their inferior instrument, with its improvised auxiliaries, is the birth-story of British admiralty. Pitted not only for life, but, as it was to turn out, for the common freedom of the seas, they showed the world a spectacle of such a victory against odds as it had scarcely beheld since the Homeric ages. On the one hand, it saw an empire, one of the greatest ever known, under the ablest of statesmen and soldiers—an empire including Spain and Portugal, most of the Netherlands, and nearly the whole of Italy; Tunis, Oran, Cape Verde, and the Canary Islands in Africa;

Mexico, Chile, Peru, and Cuba in America; the mastery of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic; and a yearly revenue ten times that of England—and on the other a little island, of which Wales and Scotland were still largely independent, containing a population less by two million than that of London and its suburbs to-day, and possessing beyond its own coast not a yard of territory overseas.

Such were the odds, and the issue was but one more instance of the inevitable decisiveness of the human factor—a factor that to-day, perhaps, such has been the extravagant growth in the weight and precision of modern weapons, has tended to become once more a little obscured. That history has revealed it again, just as it revealed it for us in the case of the Elizabethans, we hope to show; and, if fortune fought for them, it was not until they had proved themselves superior to it in skill, courage, and equanimity.

“Touching my poor opinion,” wrote Sir Francis Drake to Queen Elizabeth on April 15, 1588, “how strong your Majesty’s Fleet should be to encounter this great force of the enemy, God increase your most excellent Majesty’s forces both by sea and land daily; for this I surely think there was never any force so strong as there is now ready or making ready against your Majesty and true religion, but that the Lord of all strength is stronger and will defend the truth of His word, for His own name’s sake, unto the which be God all glory given. Thus all humble duty, I continually will pray to the Almighty to bless and give you victory over all His, and your enemies.”

“We met with this fleet,” wrote Hawkins to Sir



Francis Walsyngham on July 31st in the same year, "somewhat to the westward of Plymouth upon Sunday in the morning, being the 21st of July, where we had some small fight with them in the afternoon. By the coming aboard one of the other of the Spaniards, a great ship, a Biscayan, spent her foremast and bowsprit; which was left by the fleet in the sea, and so taken up by Sir Francis Drake the next morning. The same Sunday there was, by a fire chancing by a barrel of powder, a great Biscayan spoiled and abandoned, which my Lord took up and sent away. The Tuesday following, athwart of Portland, we had a sharp and long fight with them, wherein we spent a great part of our powder and shot, so as it was not thought good to deal with them any more till that was relieved. The Thursday following, by the occasion of the scattering of one of the great ships from the fleet, which we hoped to have cut off, there grew a hot fray, wherein some store of powder was spent, and after that, little done till we came near to Calais, where the fleet of Spain anchored, and our fleet by them; and because they should not be in peace there, to refresh their water or to have conference with those of the Duke of Parma's party, my Lord Admiral, with firing of ships, determined to remove them; as he did, and put them to the seas; in which broil the chief galleass spoiled her rudder and so rode ashore near the town of Calais, where she was possessed of our men, but so aground as she could not be brought away. That morning, being Monday, the 29th of July, we followed the Spaniards, and all that day had with them a long and great fight, wherein

there was great valour shown generally of our company."

A few days later, Admiral Howard, also writing to Sir Francis Walsyngham, said, "In our last fight with the enemy, before Gravelines, the 29th of July, we sunk three of their ships, and made some go near the shore, leaking so they were not able to live at sea. After that fight, notwithstanding that our powder and shot was well near all spent, we set on a brag countenance and gave them chase, as though we had wanted nothing, until we had cleared our own coast, and some part of Scotland of them."

Such were the Fathers of admiralty as to-day we envisage it; and, dark as some of our naval pages have since been, their tradition has never died, or lacked among us sons to sustain and adorn it in larger issues. There have been times when the country in general and its statesmen in particular have lost or undervalued their sea-vision. In 1667, less than eighty years after the defeat of the Armada, and scarcely ten after the death of Blake, one of the greatest figures in English naval history, to such a pass had our naval administration come that the Dutch were able to sail almost unchallenged up the Medway; to destroy the booms and half-equipped battleships; to capture the *Royal Charles* as a trophy; for several weeks to blockade London; and, in the end, to compel the English Government to a disadvantageous peace.

Fortunately that was a lesson that England never forgot, and, though there were to follow lapses, not a few, in the struggles that followed against the lust for world-power, first of Louis XVI, and, a hundred years

later, of Napoleon, the navy of England played a not unworthy and probably a decisive part. In Hawke and Rodney and Hood, and supremely in Nelson, in their unremembered captains and too-often ill-requited men, the spirit of the great Elizabethans lived again and ultimately prevailed, as it was bound to do. Not less for peoples in the comity of nations than for individuals in smaller societies, the highest task is to put at the disposal of human progress their characteristic genius. In military capacity, never the equal of France; behind many other nations in certain of the arts and sciences; lacking the spiritual insight of the East and the buoyant versatility of the West, this maritime adequacy, this gift of admiralty, seems, by virtue of her history, to have been allotted to Britain—and she has always been at her greatest, both for herself and for mankind, when she and her statesmen have realized this most fully.

That among her seamen this conception was as strong as ever, the history of the Great War has abundantly made clear, little as most of them dreamed, on that July morning, to be described in our first chapter, that they were on the verge of an ordeal, in which humanity's fate would lie in their hands as never in history. And yet, had they been gifted with a vision of what was to come, certain doubts might well have been pardoned in them. Colossal as the machinery was, it was largely untried. New methods and engines, with unforeseeable possibilities, were already in embryo or in actual being. The submarine, the airship, the mine—in less than half an hour, a fleet might be at the bottom. Recent



naval campaigns had shown that, whereas a century before, it had been the exception for a stricken ship to sink, it was now the exception for it to float; and what of the men in a modern naval battle?

For it would have to be remembered that, while on the one hand the terrors of naval warfare had immeasurably increased, the men who had to endure them had become, on the other, the educated products of a more sensitive civilization. Whereas, even in Nelson's time, the majority of British seamen were quite unable to read or write, and were too often, for all their courage, little better than human animals—many had been impressed by slum raids in seaport towns, and disciplined by a brutality now scarcely imaginable—the sailors of to-day, if of the same fibre, were men of a wholly different upbringing. They were the brothers of the shop-attendants, the men in the counting-house, the skilled workmen with their trade unions. They were even better educated than these, with a mellower, deeper, and more humorous philosophy of life. For them the navy was a career, from boyhood to old age, with solid rewards—and not a last resort. How would their new refinement weather the storm?

In the following pages we have tried to answer this, as often as possible, in their own words.



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## CHAPTER I

THE FOURTH OF AUGUST, 1914

Roman, Phœnician, Saxon, Dane,  
From these white shores turned not again,  
Save to the sea that bore them hence,  
For their delight or their defense,  
Judgment, persuasion, daring, thrift,  
Each to the others lent his gift,  
To whom, when all had shared, the sea  
Added her own of admiralty.

IT WAS early on the morning of July 20, 1914, that a couple of guests, who had courteously been invited to be present in the gunboat *Niger* for the King's inspection of the Fleet, made their way through the sleeping streets toward Portsmouth Dockyard. There were to be no manœuvres this year since, as had already been announced in March, a test mobilization of the Third Fleet was to take their place. This Third Fleet consisted of the older ships of the navy, and depended for a large proportion of its *personnel* upon the Royal Fleet Reserve—a body of ex-naval seamen and other ratings, brought into being under Lord Goschen, and afterward strengthened and reorganized by the Selborne administration

of 1902 onward. To man this fleet had necessitated the calling of about 10,000 seamen and 1,500 marines—all of them volunteers from civil life; and its assemblage at Spithead with the First and Second Fleets had secured, between the Hampshire coast and the Isle of Wight, the greatest exhibition of naval power that the world had then seen.

Since Wednesday, July 15th, the various units and squadrons had been gathering to their appointed stations, in some places eleven lines deep; while, upon the same occasion, and for the first time, there had been a full mobilization of the naval air forces. Less dramatic than the usual manœuvres, and unaccompanied by any of the splendour that had attended most previous Royal reviews, this test mobilization—this bringing into being of the full fighting power of our naval reserves—was so valuable an exercise that, as Mr. Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, had said in his announcement of it, it was a matter for some surprise that it had never before been undertaken. Nevertheless, as a national spectacle, it had attracted but little public attention, as the blinded windows and empty streets of Southsea and Portsmouth testified.

Grey as steel from vault to horizon but for a single wavering streak of blue, there seemed little prospect in the sky overhead of the fine day that the sailors had foretold; and nothing could have been more sombre than the early morning scene when, without ceremony and almost unnoticed, the Royal Yacht, with the King on board, left her berth in the Dockyard. Picking her course slowly past the Sally Port,

so beloved by Marryat, she steamed through the choppy waters to her place at the head of the great fleet; and it was not until she reached Spithead, unsaluted by flag or gun, that the clouds up above began to break, and the sun to shine down on that floating city, now beginning briskly to awake to life.

Long before the little *Niger*, indeed, was herself out in the Solent, all the long lines were fully astir. Trim picket-boats, scattering spray, were plying up and down with mails and provisions. Cables were rattling till only a single anchor held each of the great ships in her proper position. Flags and semaphores were busy with final instructions. Veils of smoke began to wreath in the air; and then, at the Admiral's signal, and with no other pageantry than that inherent in its own latent might, the vast assembly, with deliberate precision, began to get under way and out to sea.

Led by the Royal Yacht, the *Victoria and Albert*, her graceful black hull streaked with gold—preceded, according to custom, by the state vessel of the Elder Brethren of Trinity House—by the time the *Iron Duke*, at the head of the First Fleet's battleships, came abreast of the Nab Lightship, the Royal Yacht was already at anchor to receive the salutes of the departing navy. For two whole hours the King stood on the bridge, while ship after ship filed before him, each of the larger battleships an embodiment of greater strength than was represented by the whole fleet that had destroyed the Armada, and each of the battle-cruisers capable of a speed and striking-power that, a century before, would have seemed but the

wildest of dreams. These were led by the *Lion*, flying the flag of a then comparatively unknown officer, Sir David Beatty, who, only the evening before, had received the honour of knighthood on board the Royal Yacht.

Following the *Lion* and her consorts came the light cruisers, and after these the destroyers and submarines, each of the latter submerging and rising to the surface again as she came abreast of the *Victoria and Albert*, while, to complete the picture, and to foreshadow the enormous development of aërial power in the years immediately to follow, each accompanying aeroplane and seaplane dipped in the air by way of salute.

So the Fleet passed out, great though it was, still only a portion of the total British sea forces, and producing scarcely a ripple upon the national attention, fixed on what seemed to it then a thousand more important matters. Had it been known that, as it then was, no eye would ever behold it again; that, in less than three weeks, stripped at its war stations, the fate of the world would visibly depend upon it—with what other eyes would the whole Empire have watched Spithead on that July morning! But, for the vast mass of Englishmen the world over, the incident passed without notice. Politically, the affairs of Ireland, the readjustment of the House of Lords, and the aspirations of Labour apparently held the field. For the anxious few, to whom the position in Europe seemed already ominously uneasy, it may have been otherwise. But none of them had publicly spoken; and it is now clear, with so sinister a rapidity



did the events leading to war follow each other, that the test mobilization designed, not without criticism, to supercede the usual manœuvres, was coincident with, rather than the outcome of, the hardening of the general diplomatic position.

That was on July 20, 1914, and, upon the political events that ensued, it would be quite impossible, in the present volume, to dwell for more than a moment or two. Very briefly, they succeeded one another as follows. On July 23d, the Austrian memorandum to Serbia, relative to the murder of the Archduke Ferdinand, the heir to the throne, by a Serbian anarchist at Serajevo on June 28th, was formally submitted. So drastic were the terms of this that its warlike significance was immediately apparent to the whole of Europe; and a reply from Serbia was demanded in forty-eight hours. This was given within the specified time, all the Austrian demands being acceded to, with two exceptions. These were that Austrian representatives should collaborate with Serbia in the suppression of anti-Austrian agitation and also in the judicial proceedings that were demanded against all connected with the Serajevo murder.

The acceptance of these demands would, of course, have been tantamount to an admission by Serbia that she had ceased to be an independent nation. Nevertheless she was ready to refer them to the Hague Tribunal. The Austrian ambassador, however, acting on instructions from his Government, refused to accept anything but an unqualified assent, and left Belgrade on June 25th.

It was clear that, as regarded Serbia at any rate,

Austria had determined upon war; but Sir Edward, afterward Viscount, Grey, then in charge of the British Foreign Office, took instant and most strenuous steps to prevent this. He first proposed a conference in London, in which Germany, France, and Italy should participate, to mediate in the issues between the two countries. To this Germany disagreed, stating that discussions were taking place between Austria and Russia, from which she had hopes of a successful issue. So fraught, however, was the whole European atmosphere with dark and immeasurable possibilities, that, in common with every other great Power, Great Britain had been obliged to take certain precautions; and, in the most immediately important of these, the navy was, of course, concerned.

Owing to the illness of his wife, Mr. Winston Churchill had left London for Cromer on the evening of July 24th—Prince Louis of Battenburg, afterward the Marquis of Milford Haven, being, as First Sea Lord, left in charge. About lunch time on Sunday, July 26th, the day after the Austrian Ambassador had left Belgrade, Mr. Churchill telephoned Prince Louis, and, in view of this serious development, told him to take what steps seemed to him advisable, at the same time informing him that he was returning to town that evening instead of on Monday, as he had originally designed.

In ordinary circumstances, the demobilization, following upon the naval exercises, was to have begun on this Monday morning. But Prince Louis, having made himself acquainted with all the telegrams received at the Foreign Office, had an order telegraphed

to Admiral Sir George Callaghan, then Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleets at Portland—the newest and most powerful units of which were afterward to form the nucleus of what was to become known as the Grand Fleet—to the effect that no ship was to leave anchorage until further orders, and that all vessels of the Second Fleet were to remain at their home ports near their balance crews. Throughout Monday, July 27th, by telegrams all over Europe to our various representatives, by interviews at home with foreign ambassadors in London, the British Foreign Office, under Sir Edward Grey, ceaselessly worked to avoid the impending collision, or, if that might not be averted, at least to limit its extent.

On Tuesday, July 28th, Austria declared war on Serbia, and, by the next day, was bombarding the Serbian capital. On this day, both Russia and Belgium were mobilizing their armies, Belgium as a precautionary measure of self-defense, and Russia, as regarded her southern armies only, on account of Austria's invasion of Serbia. It was early on Wednesday morning, July 29th, that the German Chancellor, then Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, suggested to Sir Edward Goschen, our ambassador at Berlin, that if Britain remained neutral in the event of France joining Russia against an Austro-German combination, Germany would guarantee to make no territorial demands of France; would respect the neutrality of Holland; but might be forced to enter Belgium, whose integrity she would preserve, however, after the war. In respect of the French colonies, she would make no promises.

This meant the tearing up, of course, of the treaty, in which we as well as Germany had guaranteed Belgium's inviolability, and was an unmistakable index of the line of action that Germany was prepared to take, should it suit her purpose; and it was on this morning, unreported by the papers, and entirely unknown to the nation, that the First Fleet, under Sir George Callaghan, sailed out of Portland to its war-stations.

Peace was still possible, however, or so Sir Edward Grey hoped; and, while immediately rejecting, as he was in honour bound to do, Germany's proposal with regard to Belgium, he made the new suggestion of a European Council—a Council to which these problems, even at the eleventh hour, might be submitted to avert disaster. This plan was also destined to be fruitless. On July 31st, Germany sent a note to Russia demanding the instant dispersal of her armies, and requesting a favourable answer by eleven o'clock on Saturday, August 1st; and it was on the same day that Sir Edward Grey asked both Germany and France if they would guarantee the integrity of Belgium, always provided that this was not infringed by any other Power. To this France assented at once, but Germany made no reply.

Such was the position on Friday, and, on the Saturday afternoon, August 1st, Germany declared war on Russia, following this up, early on Sunday morning, with the invasion of Luxembourg by part of her advanced armies. This was the day on which the remainder of our naval reservists, including all naval and marine pensioners up to the age of fifty-five,

were called to the colours—the plans for their mobilization, reception, and embarkment, in any such event as had now arisen, having been carefully prepared and coördinated with the preliminary steps required of all other Government Departments, and included in the War Book, compiled by the Committee of Imperial Defense, under the presidency of Mr. Asquith, then Prime Minister.

Simultaneously, or rather on the previous Saturday afternoon, an order to mobilize had been received at Dartmouth—the Royal Naval College in which, and in the *Britannia* before it, so many generations of officers had received their first training. Already, on the preceding Tuesday, the cadets had been summoned to the Quarter Deck, as the big recreation hall was called, and told by the Captain that, in the event of war, they would certainly be mobilized—the six “terms” into which the cadets were divided, being ordered to report in three groups at Chatham, Portsmouth, and Devonport, in this order of departure.

Of the thrill produced by this, anybody who has been a schoolboy of fifteen will have little difficulty in forming an idea; and it may be doubted if any of the boys who heard it—many of them, alas, never to see another birthday—will ever again live through such a moment as when the summons actually came on the following Saturday afternoon. It came with added force, because, since Tuesday, the excitement had naturally died down, while most of the boys, in common with their fathers, and indeed the majority of English men and women, had found it difficult to believe that so huge a convulsion would not in some



manner be prevented. By what now seems, too, in retrospect, to have been almost the acme of ironical circumstance, they were due to start their holidays on August 4th, and to these their minds had already begun to turn again.

But the summons came, and with it in each boy, as hardly less in the college itself, the death of an era so instantaneous that it was only a little later that it could be realized. A moment before, and the normal Saturday afternoon life had been swinging along, as for so many years past—on the cricket field, in the swimming baths, in the Devonshire countryside surrounding the college; and the moment after, the cricket field was empty, with the stumps still standing there undrawn, and the lanes and river banks were being everywhere searched for such boys as were not in college. Long before nightfall half the cadets—scarcely more than children—had left the place forever; and it was not until then that the sense of what lay before them fell upon the officers and masters left behind. For a little while this was almost intolerable, and the more so because it would have seemed indecent to them to put it into words. Characteristically enough, perhaps—most of them being products of the same kind of system that had produced the boys—it was finally decided, dusk though it was, and tired as they were, to turn out the beagles.

By the evening of August 3d, therefore, August Bank Holiday, and a day of serene and cloudless beauty, the Admiralty was able to announce that the entire navy had been placed upon a war footing, the mobilization having been completed in all respects by

4 o'clock in the morning. This was the position when, in a House of Commons charged with emotions tenser than any man remembered, Sir Edward Grey rose to explain the situation and the attitude of the Government, for which he desired the country's mandate. Beginning by assuring the House that the Government and himself had worked "with all the earnestness in our power to preserve peace," he went on to deal with the British obligations toward her friends in the Entente—making it clear that the country was not bound, by any secret treaty, to provide armed assistance. That was but a small matter, however, and what had to be determined was our moral position in the circumstances that had arisen.

Dealing first with naval matters, Sir Edward Grey pointed out that, the French Fleet being in the Mediterranean, her northern and western coasts—a tribute to her confidence in ourselves—were left absolutely unprotected; while, in the Mediterranean, should the French Fleet have to be withdrawn for vital purposes elsewhere, we ourselves had not then a fleet strong enough to meet all possible hostile combinations. Under those conditions, and with a German declaration of war upon her probably the question of a few hours, it had obviously been our bounden duty to make our position clear toward France; and this had been done on the previous afternoon. Subject to the support of Parliament, the British Government had promised that, if the German Fleet should come into the Channel, or through the North Sea, to undertake hostile operations against the French coast or shipping, the British Fleet would give to the

French all the protection in its power. Just before coming to the House, Sir Edward Grey added, he had learned that, if we would pledge ourselves to neutrality, Germany would be prepared to agree that its fleet should not attack the northern coast of France. But that, as he said, was a far too narrow engagement.

Even more vital, however, was the question of Belgium's integrity, not only to France and ourselves, but to the whole basis upon which the relations of all civilized Powers had come to rest. In connection with this, Sir Edward Grey told the House that a personal telegram had just been received by the King, in which the King of Belgium had made a supreme appeal for the diplomatic intervention of Great Britain. Should Belgium be compelled, Sir Edward Grey pointed out, to compromise her neutrality by allowing the passage of foreign troops, whatever might ultimately happen to her, her independence would have gone. To stand by and see that would, in his opinion—and this was overwhelmingly endorsed both by the House and the country—be “to sacrifice our respect and good sense and reputation before the world.”

On the same day, Germany declared war on France, and, on Tuesday, August 4th, Great Britain asked for a definite assurance from Germany that Belgium's refusal to allow the passage of troops through her territory should be respected. An answer was desired before midnight, but the only German reply was to present our ambassador with his passports, and, before the day ended, Great Britain was at war not only for her life but for the life of civilization.



And now, as regarded the navy, there occurred a little incident, not without an element in it of the deepest pathos, but demonstrating, at the outset, that one at least of our great naval traditions shone as brightly as ever. For eight years—longer than any other living admiral—Sir George Callaghan had been afloat in various responsible commands; and, in 1911, he had become Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet. Its efficiency as an instrument was due in no small measure to his personal thoroughness and enthusiasm; and the mingled feelings of pride, confidence, and anxiety, with which he had led it to its war stations, can readily be imagined. At last he was to see in action, under his very eyes, that splendid weapon, for which he had so long been responsible. But it was not to be. Just as in most recent naval campaigns conducted by other countries, it had been considered advisable for the leader in war to have come fresh from staff work at headquarters, so it had been felt in England that the admiral commanding the Fleet in action must be not only a sea-officer of high standing, but one with a more intimate knowledge of the general strategical position than it had been possible for an officer so long afloat to acquire. It was for such reasons that Admiral Sampson had been placed in charge of the American Fleet in the Spanish-American War, and Admiral Togo by the Japanese Government in the Japanese War with Russia, and, for similar considerations, it had been decided to appoint Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, still young as admirals went, to the command of the Grand Fleet.

As a former Director of Ordnance and Torpedoes, and thus familiar with every branch of munitionment; as a former Third Sea Lord in control of ship-building and equipment; and, as Second Sea Lord, responsible not only for *personnel* but familiar, as Deputy for the First Sea Lord, with all questions of strategy, Admiral Jellicoe, apart from his personal qualities, had had unique opportunities of studying the whole naval problem from every possible standpoint. He had proved himself in addition, during naval manoeuvres, a tactical leader of the highest order; and he was already due, later in the year, to succeed Sir George Callaghan in command of the Home Fleets. It was therefore decided—not without considerable personal reluctance on the part of Admiral Jellicoe himself—that he should at once replace Sir George Callaghan on board the fleet-flagship *Iron Duke*; and nothing could have been more typical of naval *esprit de corps* and the subservience of even the most illustrious officer to the interests of the whole service than that this incident took place without a trace of bitterness or the slightest personal jealousy. Even so, five years after Trafalgar, having never been allowed to set foot again on English soil, Collingwood had died in his cabin, content that in his long sea-exile he had served his country; and even so, having carried upon his shoulders perhaps the heaviest individual responsibilities of the war, Jellicoe himself, at the end of 1917, walked quietly out of the Admiralty to hang pictures at home.

Born on December 5, 1859, Sir John Jellicoe was in his fifty-fifth year when he stepped on board the

*Iron Duke* as admiralissimo of the Grand Fleet. The son of a well-known captain in the mercantile marine, who lived long enough, as it is pleasant to remember, to witness his son's success, he was also related ancestrally to that Admiral Patton, who had been Second Sea Lord at the time of Trafalgar; while, in Lady Jellicoe, daughter of the late Sir Charles Cayzer, one of the Directors of the Clan Line of Steamships, he had formed, on his marriage, yet further connections with the sea. After a few years at a private school at Rottingdean, he had entered the *Britannia* as a cadet in 1872, and, from the first, seems without effort to have made the fullest use of his opportunities.

Passing out of the *Britannia*, the head of his year, with every possible prize that could be taken, he had qualified—again with three first prizes—as sub-lieutenant in 1878, being appointed a full lieutenant three years later, with three first-class certificates. Two years after this, he had taken part in the Egyptian campaign, obtaining the silver medal for the expedition, and also the Khedive's Bronze Star. Returning to Greenwich for a course in gunnery, he had obtained the £80 prize for gunnery lieutenants, and, soon afterward, had been appointed a Junior Staff Officer at the *Excellent* School of Gunnery at Portsmouth; and it was here that he had come into contact, and begun a lifelong friendship, with the greatest naval genius of modern times, then plain Captain Fisher, and scarcely known outside the service.

It was while still a lieutenant that, in 1886, he had received the Board of Trade Medal for gallantry

in a forlorn attempt—during which he was himself shipwrecked—to save a stranded crew near Gibraltar. Becoming a commander in 1891, he had been appointed to Sir George Tryon's flagship, the ill-fated *Victoria*, afterward to be sunk during manœuvres—Commander Jellicoe himself, ill in his cabin at the moment, having the narrowest escape from drowning. Six years later, he had become a captain, joining Sir Edward Seymour's flagship, the *Centurion*, on the China Station; and it was in China that, three years afterward, he had seen his next active service during the Boxer Rebellion. In this he had been Chief Staff Officer to Sir Edward Seymour, who commanded the Naval Brigade; and, at the Battle of Pietsang, on June 21, 1900, he had been very severely wounded. Happily he had recovered, receiving for his services the Companionship of the Bath, and, four years later, had found himself at the Admiralty as Director of Naval Ordnance—a position that he had held during the revolution produced by the appearance of the first British *dreadnought*. He had also been largely responsible for the immense improvement in our gunnery, associated with the name of Admiral Sir Percy Scott. In 1907 Captain Jellicoe had been promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral, being appointed to a command in the Atlantic Fleet a little later in the same year. In 1908 he had become one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and Controller of the Navy, and, two years afterward, he had reached the vice-admirals' list and had succeeded to the command of the Atlantic Fleet. In 1911, having already been made a K. C. V. O., he had been

honoured with a K. C. B. at the coronation of King George V, and, in 1912, after a short spell of service in command of the Second Battle Squadron of the Home Fleet, he had become Second Sea Lord, the position he was holding on the outbreak of war.

Such were the qualifications of the man in whose hands, on that fateful fourth of August, rested more heavily than in those of any other the destiny of our empire and of mankind. Had they proved inadequate, it is no exaggeration to say that the sun of freedom would have set for both. That they were not so is common knowledge, and the fullest justification of those who had believed in them—chief among whom was that masterful administrator, who had changed the whole aspect of our naval strategy.

Rugged of face, with hosts of detractors, and, at this time, well over seventy years of age; a prey to moods, with some defects of his qualities, and a mind too often intolerant of the weaknesses of others, it was to Lord Fisher of Kilverstone, more than to any single living man, that the navy of August 4th owed its strength. Lacking the hereditary sea-influences so strong in Sir John Jellicoe, and with none of the powerful encouragement that he himself had bestowed upon the younger admiral, Lord Fisher had risen to power by sheer mental ability united with an extraordinary force of character; although full credit must be given to Mr. Balfour who, as Prime Minister in 1902, gave Sir John Fisher, as he then was, the fullest scope for his genius.

These had included changes so radical and far-reaching, in almost every branch of naval adminis-



tration, that it would be impossible here to recapitulate them; and they are already familiar to most people. Briefly, they had amounted, first, to a drastic redistribution of our whole naval forces, including the partial absorption of the Mediterranean Fleet, hitherto our strongest command, into an enormously powerful force in the home seas always ready for war; the disestablishment of overseas squadrons of no strategical importance; the remorseless scrapping of many old ships that were doing little else than eating up money; and the reduction of distant dockyards that had long ceased to have any potential significance. Hand in hand with all this, a revision of the entire system of naval education had been undertaken; the Royal Fleet Reserve had been strengthened by the inclusion of a number of seamen who had had five or more years' training; and from these were to be drawn the balance crews that, in time of war, were to bring the vessels of the Second Fleet up to their full complement.

It had further become clear, both from the lessons learned in the naval actions between Russia and Japan, and in the strong bid for an overpowering fleet then being made by Germany, that new developments in the matter of design were a problem of the most serious urgency. It had accordingly been decided to replace the very large number of differing vessels, of which the navy then consisted, by a few definite classes, each designed to fulfil in war some clearly thought-out tactical purpose; and, at the same time, in absolute secrecy, the first of the great British dreadnoughts had been laid down.

This had not only compelled an immediate response in every navy throughout the world, but had once more secured for us the margin of vital security that had seriously been encroached upon before these reforms were initiated. That in spite of changes of Government and the natural reluctance of the nation, in view of social necessities, to increase its naval expenditure, Lord Fisher had succeeded in carrying through his programme, was the best evidence of his strength; and men of all parties had become increasingly united in endorsing the general wisdom of his attitude.

So swift, even since then, however, had been the advance in naval construction that, when Sir John Jellicoe stepped on board the *Iron Duke*, the first of the dreadnoughts was almost obsolete. Itself since outstripped by the ships of the *Queen Elizabeth* class, when war was declared on August 4th, the *Iron Duke*, as regarded battleships, was perhaps the flower of the British Navy. In full commission displacing 27,000 tons, and costing more than £2,000,000 to build, she had attained on trial, in spite of her enormous armament, a speed of no less than 22 knots. Each of her large guns, of which she carried ten, so arranged as to be able to fire on each broadside, was capable of hurling a shell from twenty to twenty-five miles, during which it would rise far higher than Mont Blanc; and, besides these, she had a dozen 6-inch guns with which to repel possible destroyer attacks. Her armour at the water-line was twelve inches thick; she was fitted with four submerged torpedo-tubes, and carried on board three thousand tons of fuel

and a complement of over a thousand officers and men.

No less powerful, though not so heavily armoured, and capable of a speed when pressed, of about thirty knots an hour, was the *Lion*, the flagship of the battle-cruisers, of whom Sir David Beatty was in command. She, too, carried ten 13.5-inch guns, with sixteen smaller quick-firing guns, and two submerged torpedo-tubes. Typical of yet another class was the since famous *Arethusa* flying the pennant of Commodore Reginald Tyrwhitt, as he then was—a light armoured cruiser, or, in Mr. Churchill's phrase, "a destroyer of destroyers," displacing a little less than 4,000 tons, but capable of a speed, when pressed, approaching forty knots. Lastly should be mentioned the *L* class, then the latest of our destroyers, consuming oil fuel only—those antennæ of the Fleet, as fast as an express train, and the very incarnation of vigilance and daring.

Such then was the navy in which on August 3d, speaking in that breathless House of Commons, Sir Edward Grey had said that those responsible for it had the completest confidence. To it had been added, on the outbreak of war, a couple of battleships that had just been completed for Turkey and two destroyer-leaders, built for Chile, that had been purchased from her by arrangement. As the child of the cockle-ships that Alfred had beaten the Danes with, that had won the Battle of Sluys for Edward III; as the offspring of the fleets of Drake or even of Nelson, its least unit would have defied belief. But it was of the same family, legitimately descended, and with the



old names scattered amongst its children. *Bellerophon*, *St. George*, *Téméraire*, its history was implicit in its roll call; while the dead animals stood re-invoked upon the prows that bore their legends. Collingwood, Benbow, St. Vincent; Albemarle, Cochrane, Hawke—they were at war for England if only as words. But did they live again in the men that hailed them? Well, the nation believed so, and, in that dark hour, this was the sheet-anchor of its hope. In the words of the King to Sir John Jellicoe, it sent them the full assurance of its confidence that they would “prove once again the true shield of Britain and of her Empire in the hour of trial.”

## CHAPTER II

### THE BATTLE OF THE BIGHT

**I**N HIS speech of August 3d in the House of Commons, Sir Edward Grey told his listeners that we had incurred no obligations to help France either by land or sea. In view not less, however, of the increasing difficulties of our diplomatic relations with Germany than of the spontaneous friendship that had been growing between ourselves and our French neighbours, the question of coöperation with the latter, in certain eventualities, had inevitably arisen and been discussed. It had also been pointed out that unless some conversations were to take place between the naval and military experts of both countries—unless some definite lines were laid down as to the methods by which each country was to help the other—such coöperation, even if desired, would almost certainly be fruitless. At the same time, in a letter written on November 22, 1912, to the French ambassador, Sir Edward Grey had made it clear that these discussions between their respective experts did not commit either Government to a specified course of action “in a contingency which has not yet arisen and may never arise.”

When the contingency arose, however, the plans were there; and the mobilization and transport to

France of our Expeditionary Force will remain on record as one of the most efficient military operations ever undertaken by any country. Second only to the rapidity and completeness with which the navy took command of the sea, were the speed and secrecy with which those first divisions were conveyed across the Channel. That in mere numbers they seem in retrospect to have been almost ridiculously inadequate is merely a measure of the colossal proportions that the war on land afterward assumed. Small as that army was, however, it was the largest force that we had ever sent oversea as a single undertaking; and it must be borne in mind that, in all probability, it was the most highly trained then in existence, and that its presence in France had both moral and material effects of almost incalculable importance.

Nobody who lived, or was staying, near any of our great southern railway lines during those early days of August will ever forget the emotions roused by that endless series of troop trains, passing with such precision day and night; and of the feelings produced in France by this visible pledge of our friendship there was instant and abundant evidence. Between August 9th and August 23d five Divisions of Infantry and two Cavalry Divisions were safely landed in France; and when it is remembered what a single division consists of some idea may be obtained of what that accomplishment meant.

Apart from the Headquarters' Staff with a *personnel* of 82, requiring 54 horses, 2 wagons, and 5 motor-cars, it embraced three Infantry Brigades, Headquarters' divisional artillery, three brigades of

Field Artillery, one Howitzer Brigade, one heavy battery, a divisional ammunition column, the Headquarters' division of engineers, two Field companies, one Signal company, one Cavalry squadron, one Divisional train, and three Field ambulances—comprising a total *personnel* of over 18,000 men, 5,500 horses, 870 wagons, 9 motor-cars, and 280 cycles, the number of guns, including machine guns, amounting to 100; and with a base establishment for each division of 1,750 men and 16 horses.

Such was the task performed by the transport officers, every kind of vessel being assembled for the purpose, from the cross-channel packet boat accommodating not more than three hundred at a time to the giant Atlantic liner carrying as many thousands. Chiefly from Southampton, but also from Dover, Folkestone, Newhaven, Avonmouth, and many other ports, that constant stream of men, horses, provisions, and equipment poured ceaselessly for nearly a fortnight, screened by destroyer-escorts, and with aeroplanes and seaplanes keeping watch over them from the sky. Without a single casualty as the result of enemy action, they were mustered and marched into line of the French left flank; and that this great achievement should have been possible within so short a period from the declaration of war is perhaps the completest tribute that could be paid to the consummate skill of our naval dispositions.

Scarcely realized by those splendid battalions, whistling "Tipperary" on the way to Mons, and even now, perhaps, hardly appreciated by the bulk of their countrymen at home, it was the navy and the navy

alone that made that glorious epic possible. With their eyes on Europe and the impending clash of the armies; hearing in imagination, under the unsuspected force of the heavy German artillery, the crumpling up of those iron-clad cupolas of the Brialmont forts at Liège—few would have thought twice, perhaps, even if they had known what they were doing, of those tiny submarines *E6* and *E8* creeping, the first of their kind, into the Bight of Heligoland. Yet but for them and their gallant crews and officers, Lieutenant-Commanders Talbot and Goodhart; but for the presiding destroyers, *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* and the submarines of the Eighth Flotilla—the passage of the Expeditionary Force might well have been impossible and the first battle of the Marne fought with another issue.

Within three hours of the first outbreak of the war, *E6* and *E8* stole out on their perilous errands; and it was upon the information brought back by them from those mined and fortified waters that the later dispositions were made. From August 7th onward, until the Expeditionary Force had been safely landed, the submarines kept their watch. In the lee of islands, at the mouths of channels, in hourly danger of detection and death, day and night, without relief, those cautious periscopes maintained their vigil. Farther to the south, guarding the approaches to the Channel, between the North Goodwins and the Ruytingen, were the two destroyers *Lurcher* and *Firedrake*, with the main covering submarine flotilla; while to the northeast of these, the *Amethyst* and *Fearless*, each with a flotilla of destroyers, took

turns about on patrol duty during the passage of the army.

Nor must it be forgotten, so swift was the subsequent progress both in the range and effectiveness of submarine activity, that this was, at that time, a branch of the service scarcely tried and of unknown possibilities. The submarines used were of a type soon so outclassed as to become almost obsolete, the easiest of prey to net and torpedo, and working at a distance from their bases then unprecedented. Nevertheless, after the Expeditionary Force had been safely transported to France, they were, in the words of Commodore, afterward Vice-Admiral, Roger Keyes, "incessantly employed on the enemy's coast in the Heligoland Bight and elsewhere, and have obtained much valuable information regarding the composition and movement of his patrols. They have occupied his waters and reconnoitred his anchorages, and, while so engaged, have been subjected to skilful and well-executed anti-submarine tactics; hunted for hours at a time by torpedo craft, and attacked by gunfire and torpedoes."

That was written on October 17, 1914, when the action, now about to be described, had already made the Bight of Heligoland a familiar term to most people, but without conveying, perhaps, to more than a very few all that it meant from a strategical standpoint. Between three and four hundred miles from the nearest of our naval bases, and from some of the chief of them more than six hundred miles distant, it was in this small area that there was concentrated practically the whole of Germany's naval forces, the



Kiel Canal connecting it with the Baltic, rendering these available in either sea.

Nor would it be easy to imagine, from the point of view of defense, either a bay of littoral with greater natural advantages. Bounded on the east by the low-lying shores of Schleswig-Holstein, with their fringe of protecting islands, and on the south by the deeply indented coast-line between the Dutch frontier and the mouth of the Kiel Canal, each of the four great estuaries, from west to east, of the Ems, the Jade, the Weser, and the Elbe, had been subdivided by sand-banks into a meshwork of channels than which nothing could have been easier to make impregnable. These were further guarded by the continuation of the scimitar curve of the Frisian Islands, beginning opposite Helder in Holland with the Dutch island of Texel, becoming German in the island of Borkum just beyond the Memmert Sands, opposite the mouth of the Ems, and continued, as a natural screen, in the successive islands of Juist, Nordeney, Baltrum, Langeoog, Spiekeroog, and Wangeroog as far as the entrance of Jade Bay, covering the approach to Wilhelmshaven.

Situated on the western lip of this channel, and connected by locks with the Ems and Jade Canal, this was one of the largest of Germany's naval bases and a town of about 35,000 inhabitants. In the next estuary, that of the Weser, and on the eastern coast of it, lay Bremerhaven, another naval base and important dockyard; and, on the same stretch of coast, at the point of the tongue of land between the Weser and the Elbe, lay Cuxhaven, yet a third and im-



mensely powerful naval port. This, with the attendant batteries of Döse, was flanked at sea by the Roter and Knecht sandbanks and the little island of Sharhörn, and was only about forty miles distant from Heligoland, lying in the centre of the Bight and commanding the hole.

Probably, from an offensive standpoint, of less value, under modern conditions, than was generally supposed, the possession of Heligoland, as a fortified outpost, was, if only psychologically, one of Germany's greatest assets. Of rocky formation and rising, at its highest point, to about 200 feet, it was not only a useful observation post but a fortress of the utmost strength. With wide views extending to the mouth of the Elbe and the coast of the neighbouring estuaries, it also protected a roadstead capable of sheltering and concealing a fleet of considerable strength; and, in addition, it possessed a wireless station of the greatest strategical importance.

From an early period, indeed, the peculiar advantages of the island had been obvious to many observers. In the seventeenth century, it had been used as a convenient station by the traders in contraband between France and Hamburg, and, for the same purposes, toward the end of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, by British smugglers. During the Danish blockade of the German ports in the Schleswig-Holstein War of 1848, its advantages had become so manifest to the then British Governor that he made a special report about it to the Colonial Office. "Possessing pilots of all the surrounding coasts and rivers and with its

roadstead sufficient for a steam fleet," it would in an emergency, he had pointed out, "amply repay the small cost of its retention in time of peace." Other considerations had supervened, however, and, in 1890, after having been in British possession for more than eighty years, Heligoland had been ceded to Germany, to become, in due course, the keystone of her naval defenses.

Such then was the Bight of Heligoland, commanded at its centre by the rocky island itself; flanked on each side by the sentinel islands of the Frisian and Schleswig coasts; and with its tributary river-mouths each an intricate meshwork of shallow and treacherous sandbanks. Subject to fogs, and responding to its prevalent winds with short steep seas of peculiar violence, it had been mined and protected since the outbreak of war with every means that ingenuity could suggest. As for the island itself, from which all women and civilians, with the exception of five nurses, had been removed, new guns had been mounted there, houses pulled down, and trees felled to assist the gunners; and it is only when this is remembered that some idea becomes possible of all that was involved in those first patrols, and in the affair of outposts, as one officer has described it, afterward to be known as the Battle of the Bight.

This was brought about as the result of the detailed information afforded by our scouting submarines, who had obtained an accurate knowledge of the procedure of the enemy's day and night patrols, and had reported that they could always collect a large force of destroyers round them whenever they showed them-

selves in the Bight. From this it became evident that a force, approaching at dawn from the direction of Horn Reef, would have every prospect of being able to cut off the enemy's returning night patrols; and an operation was accordingly decided upon, of which the following were the broad outlines. On the morning of August 28, 1914, the day appointed for the action, some submarines, with a couple of destroyers in attendance, were to penetrate into the Bight and expose themselves to the enemy, and were then to lure them, if possible, into contact with other forces that would be waiting. In close proximity, therefore, to the submarines it was arranged for two light cruisers, the *Arethusa* and *Fearless*, to rendezvous with two flotillas of destroyers, while, behind these, were to lie ambushed out at sea the Light Cruiser and Battle-Cruiser Squadrons. The general design, with full details as to the meeting-places, was communicated to each of the responsible commanders, and, in absolute secrecy, from their various bases, the forces to be engaged put to sea.

Of these the first were the submarines under Commodore Roger Keyes, who accompanied them on board the destroyer *Lurcher*, with the *Firedrake* in attendance—those stout little vessels that had already made themselves familiar, during the passage of the armies, with the proposed scene of action. Setting out at midnight on August 26th, they escorted the eight submarines chosen for this hazardous duty, *D2*, *D8*, *E4*, *E5*, *E6*, *E7*, *E8*, and *E9*; and, while these were kept in the background throughout the next day, the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* acted as their

scouts. To the perils in store for them, in the way of detection, the fine weather and calm sea naturally added; but, at nightfall of August 27th, each submarine crept to its appointed station in close proximity to the German coast.

Meanwhile, at five in the morning of the same day, the *Arethusa*, under Commodore Tyrwhitt, had set out in her turn, with two flotillas of destroyers, meeting the *Fearless* at sea during the afternoon; and, farther north, at the same early hour, Vice-Admiral Beatty, in the *Lion*, had departed with the First Battle-Cruiser and First Light Cruiser Squadrons to be at hand in case of necessity. By the evening of August 27th, therefore, all were in their places; the submarines were feeling their way into the heart of the Bight; and the excitement of all engaged, during those hushed hours of darkness, can be readily imagined and perhaps envied. The night passed uneventfully, however, and, upon the flotillas and squadrons at sea, the day broke clear and sunny, but with a good deal of mist—in some places almost amounting to fog—veiling the entrance of the Bight and the neighbourhood of Heligoland.

The time was now come for the first open movement to be made; and, while the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* began to search the waters, through which the battle-cruisers were to come, for possible hostile submarines, three of our own, *E6*, *E7*, and *E8*, designedly exposing themselves, proceeded toward Heligoland. Finding the sea clear, Commodore Keyes with the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* then followed up the three submarines; and there we may leave

them for the moment, turning our attention to the forces assembled in their rear under Commodore Tyrwhitt.

These consisted, as we have seen, of the Light Cruiser *Arethusa*, flying Commodore Tyrwhitt's broad pennant, the Light Cruiser *Fearless*, under Captain W. F. Blunt, and most of the destroyers of the First and Third Flotillas, and, at daybreak, they, too, began to push their way into the misty Bight. Nor had they long to wait for the enemy. Though the visibility was poor, seldom at first extending to more than three miles, and though the fighting in consequence afterward became confused, the general strategical plan soon proved itself to have been sound. Issuing apparently from berths between the Frisian Islands and the coast-line, a patrol of German destroyers, setting out toward Heligoland, suddenly discovered our forces on the east, or Bight, side of them. Previous to this, at about ten minutes to seven, a solitary German destroyer had already been sighted and chased, but now, for forty minutes, from twenty minutes past seven, a general action ensued—the *Arethusa* and Third Flotilla engaging the German destroyers, and steering northwest to cut them off from Heligoland.

So far the presence of the *Arethusa*, whose armament has already been described, had given us the advantage in this particular attack; but, just before eight o'clock, two German cruisers loomed out of the mist, one with four funnels and one with two. Whether these had come from Heligoland or had followed up the destroyer-patrol was not apparent, but



they immediately joined action, and, for a quarter of an hour, the little *Arethusa* found herself being bombarded by both of them as well as by various destroyers.

Firing with every gun, the *Arethusa*, then only forty-eight hours out of the builders' hands, was already in as tight a corner as she could have asked for and beginning to suffer pretty heavily.

Twice she was hit below the water-line, but saved by the skill and promptitude of her engineers; shrapnel shells were bursting over her deck, and men were already dropping as the result of them; Lieutenant Westmacott was killed at Commodore Tyrwhitt's side; the foremost port gun was shot out of action, the gunlayer being blown out of his seat; gun after gun was wrecked and the torpedo tubes disabled, till only one 6-inch gun remained effective; and a bursting shell, exploding some ammunition, started a furious fire on the *Arethusa's* deck.

Fortunately, at a quarter past eight, Captain Blunt in the *Fearless*—of which a destroyer officer afterward wrote that “to see the old *Fearless* charging round the field of fight, seeking fresh foes, was most inspiring”—and appeared on the scene, and attracted to herself the guns of the four-funnelled German cruiser. Thus relieved a little, for ten minutes longer, the *Arethusa* fought the other on a converging course, till a splendidly directed shot wrecked the German's forebridge, and she broke off toward Heli-goland, which was just in sight.

Heavily as the *Arethusa* had suffered, the little destroyer *Laurel*, who, with one of her consorts, had

first sighted the oncoming cruisers, had been punished, as was only to be expected, with even greater severity. For some little time engaging single-handed a German light cruiser and two destroyers, on every calculation of the chances of war, she should have been sunk a dozen times over. Struck first in the boiler-room, the after funnel was blown in, and the main steam-pipe damaged, four men being killed, but the remainder sticking to their posts with the utmost coolness and heroism. Next she was struck forward, three more men being killed and a gun being put out of action; and a few moments later her captain, Commander F. Rose, was wounded in the leg, but continued to direct the action. Soon afterward he was again hit, dropping on the bridge with the other leg wounded, but remained where he was, after a period of unconsciousness, until six o'clock in the evening.

Meanwhile the *Laurel* herself, while responding as best she could to the superior gunfire of the cruiser, was vigorously attacking the two destroyers, one of whom she succeeded in sinking and, when Commander Rose was no longer able to take charge, his "Number One," Lieutenant C. R. Peploe, continued the action, bringing his destroyer out, in the words of Commodore Tyrwhitt, "in an able and gallant manner under most trying conditions." Few on board, indeed, would have given much for her chances of ever coming out at all; and, when a final shell struck her near the centre gun, causing a violent explosion and setting her on fire, the likelihood of the *Laurel* making port must have seemed remote to the last degree. Thanks in a great measure, however,



to the gallantry and promptitude of Alfred Britton, Stoker Petty Officer, who put out the fire, in spite of the close neighbourhood of several lyddite shells, no further damage resulted; while the mass of fumes, in which the disabled *Laurel* now lay heavily wreathed, served in some degree as a screen against further attack from the cruiser.

It was now nearly nine o'clock; fighting had died down; and, when Commodore Tyrwhitt called his flotillas together, it was found that the First Flotilla had also been in action and sunk *V187*, the German commodore's destroyer. Unfortunately two boats' crews from the destroyers *Goshawk* and *Defender*, lowered to pick up survivors from the sunk destroyer, had had to be left behind owing to an attack by a German cruiser during this work of mercy—a self-revealing act on the part of the second navy in the world. Apart from this, though many of our vessels, especially the *Laurel* and *Arethusa*, had been heavily battered, all the flotillas were intact; while, unknown to Commodore Tyrwhitt and his command, even the abandoned boats' crews were being rescued. For, peeping through her periscope, Submarine *E4* had witnessed the whole occurrence—the sinking of *V187*, the subsequent work of rescue, and the approach of the hostile cruiser. Under her resourceful captain, Commander E. W. Leir, she had at once proceeded to attack the enemy; and, though she had not managed to torpedo her, she had driven her from the scene of action, returning, at the greatest risk, to the two boats. Coming to the surface, she had taken on board the whole of the abandoned British crews, as

well as a German officer and two men. Being unable to embark the rest—eighteen wounded Germans—she had left them with a German officer and six unwounded men, provided them with water, biscuits, and a compass, and allowed them to navigate their way back to Heligoland.

While this unique action was in progress, and while the *Arethusa* was busy repairing her guns and replenishing her ammunition, let us return again to the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake*, whom we had last seen heading for Heligoland in the wake of the decoy submarines. These also had been successful in getting into touch with the enemy forces, and, at ten o'clock, the *Arethusa*, with most of her guns now in working order again, received a message from them that they were being chased by light cruisers, and at once proceeded to their assistance.

Having joined up with them, and being now close to Heligoland, Commodore Tyrwhitt thought it wiser to retreat a little to the westward, but, a few minutes later, sighted a four-funnelled German cruiser, which opened a very heavy fire upon the British force about eleven o'clock. The position being somewhat critical, Commodore Tyrwhitt ordered the *Fearless* to attack and the First Flotilla to launch torpedoes; but, though they did so with immense spirit, the cruiser evaded the onslaught and vanished in the mist. Ten minutes later she appeared again from another direction, to be attacked both by the *Arethusa* and the *Fearless*, the former especially escaping destruction from her only by the slenderest of margins. Salvo after salvo of shells plunged into the water, some of

them barely thirty feet short of the *Arethusa*, while two torpedoes were also launched at her, but fortunately also fell short, leaving her unharmed.

Meanwhile both Commodore Tyrwhitt and Commodore Keyes had been communicating by wireless with Admiral Beatty, who, just after eleven, having evaded three submarines, ordered the Light Cruiser Squadron to the support of the light forces. While this was hurrying to their assistance, however, the *Arethusa's* 6-inch guns had proved too accurate for the German cruiser, who had broken off action, disappearing into the mist again in the direction of the Island. How badly she was damaged could only be guessed, but, four minutes later, yet another cruiser was sighted, the three-funnelled *Mainz*, which was immediately attacked both by the *Arethusa* and the *Fearless*. The blood of everybody was up now as never before, and, for twenty-five minutes, the assault was so fiercely pressed that, at the end of that time, the *Mainz*, in spite of her powerful resistance, was seen to be on fire and sinking by the head. Her engines had stopped, and it was just at this moment that the Light Cruiser Squadron appeared on the scene, reducing her, in a very few minutes, to a condition that, as Commodore Tyrwhitt put it, must have been indescribable.

How bad it was let a single quotation from a cruiser officer's diary suffice to indicate. Watching the deck of the *Mainz* through his powerful glasses, he was at first completely puzzled by two things—the absence of corpses and the enormous profusion of deck-sponges soaked in blood. It was not for some time

that he began to realize that the one accounted for the other. "Enough said," he wrote, "a six-inch projectile does not kill a man nor even dismember him; it simply scatters him."

It was now a quarter past twelve, and, by this time, Admiral Beatty was himself on the spot. From the reports received by him from the various squadron and flotilla commanders, and the obvious presence now of many enemy ships, he had come to the conclusion that, in an action where speed was essential—the main German bases being so close at hand—the lighter forces might not be able to deal with the situation sufficiently rapidly. Bearing in mind the possibilities of a concerted submarine attack, and the conceivable sortie in force of a German battle squadron, he decided that his speed would probably baffle the first, and that the latter, if he were prompt enough, could not arrive in time; while, for anything less in the way of enemy attack, he had ample forces at his disposal.

Working up his engines, therefore, to full speed, he overtook the light cruisers just as they were finishing the *Mainz*, and, a quarter of an hour afterward, sighted the *Arethusa* fighting a rearguard action with a cruiser of the *Kolberg* class—recognized as the *Köln*. Following the general plan, he at once steered to cut the latter off from Heligoland, and, seven minutes later, opened fire, chasing her at full speed out to sea. While pursuing the *Köln*, another German cruiser, apparently the *Ariadne*, was seen right ahead, steering at high speed and at right angles to the *Lion*, who was herself now travelling at 28 knots. In spite of

this, and that, before losing her in the mist, the *Lion* had only time for a couple of salvoes, she was set on fire, reduced to a sinking condition, and was soon afterward lost, as the Germans themselves admitted.

This was just before one; mines had been reported eastward; it was essential that the squadrons should not be too far dispersed; and therefore Admiral Beatty, desisting from pursuit, ordered a withdrawal, and returned to the *Köln*. She was sighted at 1:25, with her ensign still flying; the *Lion* opened fire upon her from two turrets; a couple of salvoes sufficed to sink her; and, within ten minutes, she had disappeared. By this time, the *Arethusa*, the *Fearless*, and the advanced destroyer flotillas had been in action almost continuously for more than six hours; the *Arethusa's* speed, owing to her injuries, was slowly diminishing knot by knot; upon the bridge of the little *Laurel*, Commander Frank Rose, with both his legs crippled, still kept his post; three German cruisers and two destroyers, including the commodore in command, were known to have been sunk; and, behind the mists in the Bight, nothing was more likely than that overwhelming reinforcements were hurrying to the spot. Under these circumstances, Admiral Beatty decided to withdraw his forces, covering their retirement with his powerful battle-cruisers; and it was while doing so that Captain Reginald Hall of the *Queen Mary* executed one of the smartest manœuvres of the day. Watching from his bridge, and travelling at the time something approaching thirty knots an hour, he saw an enemy torpedo, ten knots faster, that, in a matter of moments,



would strike him amidships. The destruction of the *Queen Mary*, had the submarine achieved it, would have more than outbalanced all the German losses, but, by very sharply turning full helm, the impact was just avoided in time—the battle-cruiser and torpedo, till the latter sunk, actually travelling side by side.

This was the last sign of hostile reaction to one of the most brilliant little raids in our naval history; and, for the closing picture, we must turn to Admiral Christian, who, with yet another squadron, had been waiting out at sea. To him and Rear-Admiral Campbell had been allotted the task of intercepting any vessels that might have escaped in this direction; and, at about half-past four, some of Admiral Campbell's cruisers met Commodore Keyes in the returning *Lurcher*. Limping along in company with him were the destroyers *Laurel* and *Liberty*, and on board her were 220 of the crew of the *Mainz*, Commodore Keyes having laid himself alongside the burning cruiser with the greatest chivalry and skill.

The *Laurel* was by this time quite unable to proceed farther under her own steam, and she was accordingly taken in tow by the cruiser *Amethyst*, the *Bacchante* and *Cressy* relieving the *Lurcher* of her prisoners, and sailing with them to the Nore. Meanwhile, the *Arethusa*, after her fiery ordeals, was in hardly better case than the *Laurel*, and, at seven o'clock, after struggling along homeward at about six knots an hour, found herself unable to proceed farther, and signalled for assistance. Two and a half hours later—it was then pitch dark—and with no lights, of course, permissible, the *Hogue* took her in tow, the



necessary arrangements being carried out with the aid of a couple of hand lanterns.

So the day ended without the loss to ourselves of a single vessel of any description; and when, many hours afterward, the news having preceded her, the *Arethusa* returned to harbour, scarred and lopsided—with her eleven dead and seventeen wounded officers and men—it was little wonder that every ship's syren of all that were assembled there blew her a welcome, and that every seaman who could scramble on deck cheered and cheered her again till he was hoarse.

## CHAPTER III

### CORONEL

The blood-red sun betrayed our spars,  
Fate doomed us ere we started,  
Out-gunned, out-manned, out-steamed, we sank,  
But not, thank God, out-hearted.

INEVITABLY the chief interest of the naval story clusters about the waters of the North Sea; and most of its dramatic moments have had this ocean for their setting. But, behind the Grand Fleet and its thousand auxiliaries, watching all the outlets of the German bases, lesser squadrons and detached cruisers were keeping guard throughout the world. Similarly, though the vigour and promptitude with which the Expeditionary Force was rushed across the Channel before the end of August, have held, and rightly held, the first place in the popular conception of our armies' movements, it must be remembered that, during those weeks, many other thousands of men were elsewhere transported across the waters. It must be remembered that from India alone, before the end of August, two Divisions and a Cavalry Brigade sailed for Egypt *en route* for France; that, during September and October, yet another Brigade was sent from India to East Africa, in time to avert an invasion of the British Colony there that might

have had most serious results; that, during October and November, twenty batteries of Horse, Field, and Heavy artillery, and thirty-two battalions of regular infantry were relieved by the transport from England to the East of an equivalent force of Territorials; and that a force of native infantry was despatched to assist Japan in the successful occupation of Kiao Chao.

That represented but a small proportion of the continual military movement that was going on from end to end of our scattered empire; and it was only one aspect of the tremendous problem that faced our navy in the outer seas. What this amounted to can best be comprehended, perhaps, by a brief consideration of what was actually accomplished. After the first week of August, the mercantile marine activities of the Central Empires ceased to operate. Six and a half million tons of shipping in all the seas of the world were thus almost instantly immobilized. Further, every German colony, but for its wireless, was isolated from its centre and prepared for capture; while of the two million men of enemy origin who might otherwise have returned home to join the armies, scarcely a handful—such was the navy's mastery—was, in fact, able to do so. Lastly, not a single Dominion, Colony, or Dependency of Great Britain or her Allies was invaded or seriously molested by an enemy naval force.

Now to have achieved all this, while at the same time containing the German High Seas Fleet in the North Sea—and so containing it that not even a single squadron was able to break through on to our lines

of commerce—is the best witness to the fundamental rightness of our initial naval strategy; although the test of war immediately emphasized what was then our chief need—an even larger number, such were our manifold requirements, of fast battle-cruisers. It was our shortness in this respect that, in the last analysis, led to the disaster of Coronel, arguable as the wisdom of certain of our oversea dispositions may not unjustly now seem to have been. And, while in our treatment of both the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, as regarded the Mediterranean, and the command of von Spee in the Far East and subsequently in the South Pacific, there are many points to be reasonably debated before the bar of naval judgment, neither problem can be fairly considered apart from the whole situation. In the present and following chapters we are concerned only with von Spee and the five vessels under his command.

To consider the vessels first, these consisted of two armoured cruisers, the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*, and three light cruisers, the *Nürnberg*, the *Dresden*, and the *Leipzig*. Both the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* were most efficient units, each with a speed of over 22 knots, each with a displacement of over 11,000 tons, a belt of 6-inch armour amidships, and each carrying eight 8.2-inch guns, six 6-inch guns, eighteen 24-pounders, and four torpedo-tubes. The three light cruisers were each capable of a speed of about twenty-five knots, carried ten 4.1-inch, eight 5-pounder, and four machine-guns, with two submerged torpedo-tubes, and displaced between 3,000 and 4,000 tons. It will be seen at once, therefore,

that they formed a homogeneous and easily manœuvred squadron, and it may be readily admitted that they were not only gallantly but very skilfully handled; while their concentration—since, at the outbreak of war, they had been scattered over half the world—was a feat of no mean order, however open to criticism may have been the larger policy involved in it.

As for von Spee himself, he seems to have been of a type apparently all too rare in the German naval service, a chivalrous, modest, and efficient seaman, reticent in victory, and brave in defeat. Under his command, the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* had attained an extremely high standard of gunnery, and it is probable that in this respect they were second to none flying the German flag.

Leaving Kiao Chao during July, the war had found von Spee and the two larger cruisers many leagues distant among the Western Pacific islands and separated by thousands of miles from the other three cruisers, the *Dresden*, the *Nürnberg*, and the *Leipzig*. Of these the *Dresden* was in the Atlantic, divided from the other two by the American continent, and narrowly escaped capture at the hand of the British West Atlantic Squadron, of which Admiral Cradock was then in command. She successfully evaded him, however, and, making her way south, entered South American waters off the coast of Brazil, where her only possible antagonist at the time was the British cruiser *Glasgow*—a light cruiser of the *Bristol* class, displacing about 4,800 tons, capable of a speed of 25 knots, and carrying two 6-inch and ten 4-inch guns.

Meanwhile, on August 11th, with all her lights out, there had crept out of the port of Pernambuco a German steamer, the *Baden*, carrying 5,000 tons of coal, which met and supplied the *Dresden* at the Rocas Islands. Three days afterward, the latter sank the *Hyades*, homeward bound from the River Plate to Holland with a load of grain, and, on August 26th, she sank the British steamer *Holmwood*, also off the coast of South America. A fortnight later, on her way to the Pacific, the *Dresden* and her collier were creeping round Tierra del Fuego, and here they met a second collier, the *Santa Isabel*, which had left Buenos Aires on the 6th of August, nominally bound for Togo.

That was in the middle of September, and, about a fortnight later, with her name effaced, her masts altered, and her funnels repainted, the *Santa Isabel* entered Valparaiso, remaining there until the end of the month, when she cleared, nominally for Hamburg, but in reality to join von Spee. In the meantime the *Dresden* had announced her arrival in the Pacific by attacking the liner *Ortega* near the western entrance of the Magellan Straits; and it was only by the resource and seamanship of the latter's captain that the British ship succeeded in escaping.

Bound for Valparaiso with 300 French reservists on board, she had a normal speed of no more than 14 knots, while the *Dresden*, as we have seen, was at least half as fast again. But the Master of the *Ortega* was not to be beaten. Calling for volunteers to assist the stokers, he succeeded in working his old liner up to 18 knots an hour, and at the same time headed for



Nelson's Strait—a perilous and uncharted passage. Chased by the *Dresden*, and with her shells plunging on each side of him, he made the dangerous channel in safety. The *Dresden* turned on her heel, afraid to follow him; and he successfully navigated, probably for the first time in history, an 8,000-ton liner through Nelson's Strait.

With the *Dresden* in the Pacific, all von Spee's future squadron was now at least in the same ocean, and both the *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig*, by stealthy degrees, were approaching the German admiral—the former, during September, having cut the cable between Bamfield in British Columbia and the Fanning Islands, and the latter having sunk the British steamer *Bankfield* off Peru, while *en route* to England with 6,000 tons of sugar; the oil tank *Elsinore*; and the steamer *Vine Branch*, outward bound from England to Guayaquil.

Whether, in the long run, it would not have been to Germany's advantage for these cruisers to have played their lone hands on the commercial trade routes; to have followed the example of the *Emden* and *Karlsruhe* rather than to have formed a fighting squadron, is a matter for argument. Coronel was their justification. The Falkland Islands saw their end. It was finally in the neighbourhood of Easter Island that they united with von Spee, who had in his turn eluded both the China and Australian squadrons, sinking a small French gunboat off Papeete, and bombarding the town on September 22d.

By this time, the *Glasgow* had been reinforced in

Brazilian waters by Sir Christopher Cradock in the *Good Hope* and Captain Brandt in the *Monmouth*, with the armed liner *Otrando* in attendance; and they, too, after similar secret coaling, were making their way round Cape Horn into the Pacific. Time after time they had heard, faint and far, the wireless calls of the *Dresden* and her colliers—they had even, on more than one occasion, quite unsuspectingly, been within a comparatively few miles of her—but they had never found her and were but slowly able to divine her intention of joining von Spee.

That this admiral, with the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*, was making his way eastward was now probable, and the old battleship *Canopus* was in consequence on her way to strengthen Cradock with her 12-inch guns. Up to the last, however, all were uncertain of the enemy's exact whereabouts and strength; and this was the position when, on the last day of October, 1914, the *Glasgow* was detached to run into Coronel—not unknown to von Spee, who had instantly ordered the *Nürnberg* to hover outside and watch her movements.

Such had been the steps whereby, across so many leagues of water, the opposing squadrons had been collected; had felt their way tentatively, and, as it were, half blindfold, into the neighbourhood of each other; and were now, off the coast of Chile, each so far from home, on the verge of their fatal collision. With the character and strength of von Spee and his forces we have already briefly dealt; and, in Admiral Cradock, he had an opponent of an essentially British and traditional type. A lover of sport, particular as

to his wines, of medium stature, bearded and swarthy, Sir Christopher Cradock was less identified with the modern and scientific school of naval officer than with those light-hearted adventurers, of whom Sir Richard Grenville in his little *Revenge* stands as an historic example.

Entering the navy in 1875, he had been attached in 1891 to the East Soudan Field Force, had acted as A. D. C. to the Governor of the Red Sea, and been present at the Battle of Tokar. For his services in that campaign, he had received the Khedive's Bronze Star and the fourth class of the Medjidieh. Nine years later saw him with the British Naval Brigade in China at the capture of the Taku Forts and the relief of Tientsin, and for this he had received the China Medal with clasps, and, in 1902, the C. B. In 1904 he was given the testimonial of the Royal Humane Society for saving the life of a midshipman in Palmas Bay, Sardinia; in 1909 he was A. D. C. to the King, and received the K. C. V. O. in 1912. At the outbreak of the war, as we have seen, he was in charge of the West Atlantic Squadron.

Such was von Spee's opponent—a man perhaps, if anything, too ready to fight, whatever the odds—though it must not be forgotten that, until retreat was impossible, he could hardly have been certain of the forces against him. Whether or not he should have deduced these—whether he had in fact done so—must remain a matter of opinion; the captain of the *Canopus* seems to have entreated him not to join issue without him; but it is equally clear that, if he had waited for the slow old battleship, von Spee,

had he so desired, could have avoided action indefinitely.

Considered in the light of after events, indeed, no action of the war seems to have depended less on human prevision, or to have been so determined by natural forces and a leisurely and inscrutable destiny. From the beginning, the odds were against Cradock, just as, six weeks later, they were against von Spee; and when the *Glasgow*, the first to sight the enemy, saw the four funnels of the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*, there could have been little doubt, save for extraordinary good luck, of the final issue of the battle.

Opposed to these two cruisers, each faster than the *Good Hope* or the *Monmouth*, the *Good Hope* had an armament of two 9.2-inch guns as against the eight 8.2-inch guns of the *Scharnhorst*, while the *Monmouth* in reply to the *Gneisenau*, with an equal armament to the *Scharnhorst*, could oppose nothing more powerful than 6-inch guns which were therefore completely outranged. The *Good Hope* herself, indeed, owing to faulty construction and the heavy seas, was but little better off; the *Otranto*, an unarmoured liner, was wholly useless in such an emergency; the middle-aged *Canopus*, with her superior gun-power, was still plunging along 200 miles away; while the *Glasgow*, speedy and efficient as she was, was no match for the combined *Dresden* and *Leipzig*—to say nothing of the *Nürnberg*, who came up later to complete the destruction of the *Monmouth*.

It was about a quarter past four on the afternoon of November 1, 1914, Admiral von Spee being then some forty miles north of the Bay of Arauco on the

Chilian coast, and the *Nürnberg*, which had returned after her vigil, having been once more detached on a scouting cruise, that the *Glasgow* and *Monmouth*, *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* first sighted and identified each other. It had been a day of strong sunshine, sudden showers, high wind and a rough sea, and all the ships, especially the smaller cruisers, were rolling heavily and shipping a lot of water. When first sighted, the *Glasgow* and *Monmouth*, soon to be joined by the *Otranto*, were to the southwest of the German admiral, fifteen miles distant and pursuing a southerly course—obeying the order of Admiral Cradock to join up with the *Good Hope*. This was still invisible to the German squadron, but was sighted about forty minutes later, when Admiral Cradock took the head of the British line and both sides moved into battle formation.

The position at this moment—with the long prologue over and the curtain rising upon the first act—was as follows: a little to the north and nearer to the land, that is to say somewhat east of the British line, the Germans were steaming south, the *Scharnhorst* leading, followed by the *Gneisenau* and the *Leipzig*. The *Dresden* was some miles astern, and the *Nürnberg* not yet in sight, though she had been recalled from her second patrol. On the British side, also steaming south, farther to sea, Admiral Cradock was leading, followed by the *Monmouth* and the *Glasgow*, the *Otranto* bringing up the rear, and with the *Canopus* far to the south, steaming north, but of course out of the picture.

This was at about half-past five, both sides being



fully aware now of the strength and disposition of the other; both suffering severely from the strong head wind and high seas that were continually burying them, and both with their eyes upon the setting sun now dropping rapidly toward the horizon. How vital that sun was each had instantly perceived. For the moment, protected by the glare of it, it advantaged Sir Christopher Cradock, von Spee's squadron being brightly illuminated. But the distance was far too great for the British guns, and, in less than an hour, the conditions would be reversed. In less than an hour, himself in half darkness, von Spee would have the British silhouetted against the after-glow; and, in consequence, there had begun a race, which could have but one ending, for the inside or landward position.

Already nearer to the land than Admiral Cradock, and perceiving Cradock's manœuvre to try and reverse this, von Spee had crammed full speed on, and was racing to forestall him, in the teeth of the wind, at 20 knots an hour. To do so was essential, and to secure this position he outraced the *Leipzig* and *Dresden*, his superior speed enabling him to draw parallel with Cradock, while ten miles of sea still parted the squadrons. Here, while keeping pace with the slower British vessels, he was able to slacken down and await the *Leipzig* and *Dresden*; and when, at ten minutes past six, these had joined him, he began to draw nearer to the doomed British squadron. This, as all had foreseen, was now a series of dark targets, tossing clearly outlined against the sunset, with the rising moon in the east to render a chance of escape



even less possible; and, at a distance of a little over five miles, von Spee ordered the first shot.

The battle was now joined, and with every circumstance conspiring against the indomitable Cradock and his men. Handicapped by the seas as both sides were, the British, farther out, suffered more severely; while, to the expert gunners of the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, discounting this one factor, they formed an ideal objective. Within five minutes the *Good Hope* was hit, and, though she replied at once, her fire was ineffective; while, during the next quarter of an hour, the *Scharnhorst's* gunners were finding her time after time. Meanwhile the *Otranto* had been ordered out of action; the *Gneisenau* was pouring shell into the *Monmouth*; and the *Leipzig* and *Dresden* were engaging the *Glasgow*, who was gallantly responding to the best of her ability.

So the fight went on through the brief twilight and into the early moonlit darkness. Thirty-five hits upon the ill-fated *Good Hope* were counted by the *Scharnhorst's* gunners. One of her turrets was destroyed and a fire started, followed presently by an explosion that shook the whole air—the white flames mingling, in von Spee's own words, “with the bright green stars,” like some dreadful firework. That, as von Spee believed, was the end of her. But Cradock was not yet finished, though his guns were out of action. The opposing vessels were now only two miles apart, and the *Good Hope* was trying to manœuvre to let off her torpedoes. It was but an expiring effort, however; von Spee stood away a little; the *Monmouth*, totally outgunned, had already been silenced; a

hurrying rain-cloud had added to the darkness; and, though the German gunners, sighting by the red reflection of the fires that they had kindled on the two British vessels, still continued to fire a round or two, their adversaries were powerless to respond.

It was now nearly eight o'clock. To the watching von Spee, the fires on the horizon had died down, the *Good Hope's* quenched by the seas that covered her, and the *Monmouth's* put out by the efforts of her crew. Though both vessels must, he knew, have been badly crippled, von Spee was unaware, of course, of their real condition, and had ordered his light cruisers to chase and attack them, himself crossing the British line, and turning his course northward.

Meanwhile the *Monmouth*, staggering along in the darkness, and slowly sinking by the head, was in touch with the *Glasgow*—the neighbourhood of the enemy and the state of the sea rendering any assistance from the latter impossible. The *Glasgow* herself had had an almost miraculous escape, not only from destruction, but even from serious damage. "I cannot understand," wrote one of her officers, "the miracle of our deliverance; none will ever. We were struck at the water-line by, in all, five shells out of about 600 directed at us, but strangely not in vulnerable places, our coal saving us on three occasions—as we are not armoured and should not be in battle line against armoured vessels. We had only two guns that would pierce their armour—the *Good Hope's* old two 9.2's, one of which was out of action ten minutes after the start. A shell entered the captain's pantry and continued on, bursting in a pass-

age, the fragments going through the steel wall of the captain's cabin, wrecking it completely. Again no fire resulted."

Such was the position, with the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* hunting them through the darkness up from the south, the *Dresden* and *Leipzig* between them and the land, and the *Nürnberg* steaming down from the north. To remain together would be to sacrifice both; the *Canopus*, still in ignorance, had to be warned; and the *Monmouth* seems to have signalled to the *Glasgow*, advising her to part company and make her escape as best she could. As senior officer, however, the decision rested with the *Glasgow's* captain; and it would be difficult to conceive a more poignant situation. Every instinct not only of himself but of all on board bade him stay with the *Monmouth*. But the reasons for not doing so were remorseless, and had, in the event, to be obeyed. Moreover, the enemy had already been sighted steaming abreast, about four miles away, morsing with an oil lamp; and the reluctant order to depart at full speed could no longer be delayed. Half an hour later, far behind them, the watchers on the *Glasgow* counted seventy-five flashes. On her way to rejoin von Spee, and almost by accident, the *Nürnberg* had run across the *Monmouth* and sunk her with point-blank fire.

Sir Christopher Cradock was a Yorkshireman, and, upon the monument to his honour, unveiled two years later in York Minster, were inscribed these words from the Book of Maccabees, than which none could have more fully expressed him—

God forbid that I should do this thing,  
To flee away from them;  
If our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren,  
And let us not stain our honour.

So ended the first act of this outer-sea epic. That  
another was to follow none knew better than von  
Spee.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BATTLE OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

**S**ITUATED off the southeast coast of South America the group of islands, known as the Falklands, had definitely belonged to Great Britain since 1833. It consisted of about a hundred larger and smaller islands, the two chief being East and West Falkland, separated by a narrow channel of water known as the Falkland Sound. About 250 miles, at the nearest point, from Tierra del Fuego in the extreme south of the continent, they were some 300 miles distant from the Atlantic entrance of the Magellan Straits. Their climate was healthful but not attractive. Rain fell on more than half the days of the year. The seas surrounding them, even in their December midsummer, were of an arctic coldness and more often than not shrouded with mists that made navigation difficult and unpleasant. The chief industry was sheep farming, most of the farmers and shepherds being of Scottish descent; but there was a certain amount of business done at Port Stanley in the way of ship-repairing and the provision of marine stores.

Until 1904, when it was abandoned as such, Port Stanley had been a naval station, and it still remained the principal town of the islands and the headquarters

of the Government. Situated on the easternmost projection of the eastern of the two chief islands, it had a population of about a thousand, and stood on a tongue of land between the ocean on the south and the innermost of two natural and connected harbours on the north. Of these, the outer and larger was known as Port William, with its entrance to the east, the inner recess, on the shore of which stands the town, being known as Port Stanley.

In 1914 the Governor was the Hon. W. L. Allardyce, and it was toward the middle of October that he heard from the Admiralty that a raid on the islands was to be expected and that suitable precautions should be taken. Accordingly, on October 19th, a notice was posted that all women and children were to leave Port Stanley; and this was promptly obeyed, camps being formed inland, and provisions stored in various places. All Government documents, books, and monies were removed from the town and conveyed to a safe hiding-place; while, at the same time, a defense force was organized under the Governor, mustering, all told, about 130 men. All were good shots, and, with their two machine-guns, were fully prepared to fight to the last. On advice from the Admiralty, they were to adopt retiring tactics, should the Germans land; horses and emergency rations were provided for everybody; and, with their knowledge of the terrain, and their island hardihood, there can be little doubt that they would have put up a strong resistance.

This was the position in the island when, on November 3d, a wireless message was received,



announcing the disaster at Coronel; and, five days later, this was followed by the arrival of the *Glasgow* and *Canopus*. A raid by the enemy now amounted to a certainty; both the British vessels believed the Germans to be on their heels; and when, a few hours afterward, they received orders to sail for Monte Video, the feelings of the defenders naturally sank a little. They kept up a stout heart, however; the strictest watch was maintained; for several days and nights the Governor never had his clothes off; and, when the *Canopus* reappeared, having been turned back before reaching Monte Video, in order to help the islanders with her guns, there was a general conviction that they would be able to give von Spee a somewhat difficult problem to solve on his arrival.

Laying a chain of mines at the entrance to Port William, the *Canopus* was put aground in the inner harbour, whence, protected by the land, she would be able to fire her big shells out to sea; her smaller guns were converted into batteries, mounted in strategic positions among the surrounding hills. Meanwhile in England, under Lord Fisher, who had been recalled to the Admiralty as First Sea Lord, secret and decisive measures had been instantly adopted. Within ten days of the Battle of Coronel, by an act of the same genius that had created them, the *Invincible* and *Inflexible*—two of our earlier, but still very powerful battle-cruisers, each capable of a speed of 27 knots and carrying eight 12-inch guns—had been detached from the Grand Fleet, coaled and munitioned, and, under Vice-Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee, were steaming toward the equator, unknown

to the world, to avenge Sir Christopher Cradock and his lost crew.

Ten days later, at a rendezvous in the South Atlantic, they met their assigned consorts under Rear-Admiral Stoddart; and here the fleet assembled that was to proceed, first to the Falkland Islands, and thence, round Cape Horn, to engage von Spee. Apart from its colliers, of which there were about fourteen, several of these being out-steamed on the way to Port Stanley, it consisted of the *Carnarvon*, with Rear-Admiral Stoddart, the *Kent*, *Glasgow*, *Bristol*, and the armed merchantman *Macedonia*, including, of course, the two battle-cruisers from England, Sir Doveton Sturdee flying his flag on the *Invincible*.

The *Glasgow* had been in Rio as recently as November 16th, but every precaution against discovery had been taken; all communication by wireless had been strictly forbidden by Admiral Sturdee; and, at about eleven o'clock on the morning of December 7th, the squadron slipped quietly into Port William. For the anxious defense force on the islands the long vigil was now at an end. For such of the officers as could be spared ashore, and for those whose vessels had to wait their turn for coaling it was a welcome opportunity to touch land again, and they were sufficiently prompt to make characteristic use of it. One of them tells us that, sallying out with his gun, he shot two geese and six hares for the wardroom larder—as ignorant as everybody else of the larger game that was even then heading for the islands.

For the most part, however, all on board every

vessel were hard at work getting ready for the search—a search that was still believed, of course, to be inevitable, no news of von Spee having reached the island. The *Glasgow* and *Bristol*, in the inner harbour, were the first to coal, followed by the *Carnarvon*, who only finished at four o'clock the next morning, her collier, the *Trelawney*, then going to the *Invincible*. This was berthed beside her in the outer harbour of Port William, the *Inflexible* keeping them company, with the *Kent* and *Cornwall* lying a little to the south, the *Kent*, with her steam up, acting as guardship. Further to seaward, beyond the mine barrage, was anchored the *Macedonia*, serving as a look-out vessel; while in the inner harbour were the *Bristol* and *Glasgow*, with the old *Canopus* still aground there. So the night passed. At various points in the islands, the volunteer sentries kept their watch; and it was from one of these, stationed on Sapper's Hill, above Port Stanley, that the first news of the approach of enemy vessels was received between seven and eight the next morning.

The day had dawned clear, with a calm sea and a light breeze blowing from the northwest. From horizon to horizon, in the glowing sunlight, the sea stretched blue as the Mediterranean. It was such a day as, in the Falkland Islands, might for weeks together have been prayed for in vain; and, hidden in the harbour, lay such a fleet as von Spee, in his most depressed moments, was unlikely to have pictured. That he would find the *Canopus* there he may have thought probable. That the *Glasgow* and *Bristol* might be there he had deduced from their wireless.

But that the giant battle-cruisers, *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, lay quiet as death behind those painted hills—that this December morning was the last morning that he would ever look upon on earth—none had told him, and, for all his forebodings, he himself could never have guessed. But the stage was set again; the curtain had risen; the watcher on Sapper's Hill had heralded the last act. Let us look down for a moment with impartial eyes upon the chosen scene.

Far to the south, resolved at last on action, but soon to pay the price of its strange hesitation, steamed the German squadron with its two colliers, the *Santa Isabel* and the *Baden*. To the watcher on Sapper's Hill, at that early hour, only the foremost cruisers were as yet observable, faint smudges on the southern horizon—the *Gneisenau* and the *Nürnberg*. Equally faint, but clear and at their mercy, must have seemed that spit of land to the observers on the *Gneisenau*, wholly unconscious, as they then were, of the brisk activities that lay behind it. Nor were the cruisers in the hidden harbour any more aware of what the day heralded for them. With the prospect before them of a voyage round Cape Horn, they were stirring with preparations, but not for immediate action. The *Kent* alone of them, acting as guard-ship at the mouth of Port William, had her steam up. Only the *Glasgow* and *Bristol* in the inner harbour had finished coaling and lay with full bunkers; and the latter had her fires out in order that her boilers might be cleaned. Beside the flagship *Invincible*, the colliers were still busy; the flag-lieutenant was yawning in his dressing-gown over a cup of tea. The *Inflexible*,

on one side of her, was in similar case, while, upon the other, the *Cornwall* was busy repairing her engines. Over them all arched a sky of serene and cloudless beauty. The air was so limpid that, through powerful glasses, the events of fifteen miles away might be happening almost at hand.

The flag-lieutenant went on yawning. He had had a long day yesterday, had been working most of the night, and was short of sleep. There came a knock at the door. A signalman entered. The smudges on the horizon had revealed themselves as men-of-war. They could only be von Spee's, and yet it was hardly believable. To tell the admiral was the work of an instant; and soon the amazing tidings were known throughout the fleet. The *Kent* was at once ordered to weigh anchor, and every ship in the squadron to raise steam for full speed. Colliers were shoved off. Sailors who were in their "land rig" scrambled out of it like quick-change artists. Down in the engine-rooms, grimed men worked miracles, of which, for the moment, let the *Cornwall* give an example. At eight o'clock, as we have said, she had her starboard engine down, with one cylinder opened for repairs at six hours' notice; and yet, before ten o'clock, she was under way, and, by a quarter past eleven, making more than twenty knots.

Meanwhile, at twenty minutes past eight, the Sapper's Hill signaller had reported more smoke on the horizon; and, a quarter of an hour later, as the *Kent* steamed to the harbour entrance, the captain of the *Canopus* reported this to be proceeding from two ships about twenty miles off, the two first sighted



being now little more than eight miles away. Three minutes afterward yet another column of smoke was signalled from Sapper's Hill; and the *Macedonia* was ordered to weigh anchor on the inner side of the other cruisers. It was now evident that von Spee was arriving in force, probably with the whole of his squadron; and, at twenty minutes past nine, the *Gneisenau* and *Nürnberg* were seen, broadside on, training their guns on the wireless station. By this time, however, at less than seven miles distance, they were well within range of the *Canopus*, who anticipated them by firing a salvo over the low-lying tongue of land that sheltered her. None of this first shower of 12-inch shells seems to have been effective in damaging the enemy; but it no doubt confirmed for the German admiral the presence of the *Canopus* in the harbour; and both the *Gneisenau* and *Nürnberg* were at once observed to alter their course. For a moment it appeared as if they intended to approach the *Kent* at the harbour entrance, but, a few minutes later, they wore away with the evident intention of joining their comrades.

Both cruisers were now visible from the upper bridge of the *Invincible*; and the tops of the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* must have been equally apparent to them; though it still seems uncertain whether they had positively identified yet the two great cruisers that spelt their doom. Meanwhile, in the harbour, every preparation was being pushed forward with the utmost speed. At twenty minutes to ten the *Glasgow* weighed anchor and steamed down the harbour to join the *Kent*. Next to the two battle-cruisers, she



was the speediest vessel in the squadron, and her orders were to observe the enemy. Five minutes later, the *Carnarvon* put out, followed by the *Inflexible*, *Invincible*, and *Cornwall*, the two big battle-cruisers burning their oil fuel, prudently spared for the occasion that had arrived.

It was now twenty minutes past ten, and the character of the future action was already determined. For the Germans it had become instantly clear that their only hope—if such it might be called—lay in flight; and, on the British side, the order had been signalled for a general chase at full speed. Gathering pace, the two battle-cruisers from the north soon overtook and outstripped the *Carnarvon* and *Kent*, the position at eleven o'clock, with the squadron as a whole making about 20 knots, being as follows—the *Glasgow* was still leading, but had been ordered to remain within two miles of the flagship *Invincible*; next came the *Invincible* herself, with her decks flooded by hoses to prevent fire and wash away the last of the coal-dust; the *Inflexible* followed behind her, on her starboard quarter, with the *Kent* falling away from her astern and aport, followed by the *Carnarvon*, with the faster *Cornwall* reluctantly obeying orders to remain upon her quarter. Left behind in the harbour were the *Bristol* and *Macedonia*; but, just at this moment, on the other side of the island, a lady watcher at Fitz Roy, Mrs. Roy Felton, had seen and reported three other German vessels. Two of these—the third made its escape—were the colliers, already familiar to us, the *Santa Isabel* and *Baden*. The coal on board these vessels

had been obtained from various sources since the action off Coronel, some from the *Valentino*, a French prize, and some from the British vessel *Drummuir*, captured on December 2d; and the *Bristol* and *Macedonia* were at once ordered by Admiral Sturdee to deal with them. Between nine and ten miles to the south, on a course east-north-east, von Spee in the *Scharnhorst* was travelling at full speed, followed by the *Dresden*, the *Gneisenau*, the *Nürnberg*, and the *Leipzig*, in the order named.

This was the situation then, and, before considering in detail one of the completest naval victories in our history, let us examine it for a moment as it presented itself to Admiral Sturdee, a remarkably cool-brained and deliberate tactician. With a long day in front of him, with nothing to fear in the way of destroyer or submarine-attack, with the whole of the enemy squadron now before his eyes, and with perfect visibility, he possessed under his command, in his own flagship, in the *Inflexible*, and in the *Glasgow*, three vessels at least that, in the matter of speed, were considerably superior to the enemy. Further, although the enemy's gunnery was known to be excellent both in speed and accuracy, the 12-inch guns of the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* enabled him to dictate a long-range action; and there were two other weighty considerations that suggested the wisdom of such a course. For, while in gun-power the two battle-cruisers were far ahead of the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, in armour they were not so strong; and the nearest repairing yard was at Gibraltar. There were no obligations, therefore, to run

any risk. There was every reason for not doing so. So long as, in the end, the Germans were sunk, a few hours would make no difference. Sailors fight best when well fed. Tobacco is an excellent solvent for undue excitement; and the British admiral therefore gave orders that dinner was to be served as usual, and that the men were to be allowed a few minutes for a quiet smoke. As one of the officers on the flagship afterward observed, they might almost have been at manœuvres off Spithead—precisely the atmosphere that Admiral Sturdee had wisely designed to create.

It was at five minutes to one, at a range of about nine miles, that the first shot was fired by the *Inflexible*, taking for her target the light cruiser *Leipzig*, the last vessel of von Spee's line. Five minutes afterward the *Invincible* followed suit, also taking the *Leipzig* for her target; and soon afterward the battle resolved itself into three separate encounters—that between the *Invincible*, *Inflexible*, and *Carnarvon*, and the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*; that between the *Glasgow* and *Cornwall*, and the *Leipzig*; and finally, after an epic chase, that in which the *Kent* overtook and sank the *Nürnberg*.

These conditions were first brought about when, at twenty minutes past one, the *Leipzig* turned away toward the southwest, soon to be followed by the *Nürnberg* and *Dresden*, with the *Glasgow*, *Kent*, and *Cornwall* in pursuit. With them had started the *Carnarvon*, but the rear-admiral in command of her, finding his speed insufficient to keep up with the light cruisers, had to give up the chase, and joined the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* in engaging the *Scharn-*

*horst* and *Gneisenau*. Leaving the action of the smaller cruisers in the capable hands of Captain Luce of the *Glasgow*, let us follow the fortunes of the other three in the most immediate and important task. Of these the ten-year-old *Carnarvon*, pushing on as stoutly as she could, was still trying vainly to keep up with her swifter sisters; and the first encounter was reduced, therefore, to a four-cornered fight lasting for about fifty minutes.

Beginning at twenty minutes past one, the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, after five minutes of a running battle, turned a little to port, began to close the range, and accepted the challenge; and, five minutes later, opened fire themselves. Though of smaller calibre, their guns, firing very rapidly, were as usual handled with extreme ability; and, in the words of the flag-lieutenant—half-way up the *Invincible's* foremast, in the director-tower with Admiral Sturdee—they shot indeed “fiendishly well.” “We went on hammering away,” he wrote, “for some time, getting closer and closer, and they were hitting us pretty badly. I thought that our foremast had gone once. The Admiral and I were half-way up so as to get a good view. One of the legs of the mast was shot away. Shell fire is unpleasant, to put it mildly. Exploding shells, when they hit the ship, are worse, as one wonders how many she will stand. The Admiral was wonderfully cool and collected, and I bobbed my head at every shell, and got a stiff neck from doing it!”

At a quarter to two the *Invincible* was being straddled—the *Scharnhorst's* shells, that is to say, were exploding on both sides of her—and Admiral

Sturdee, consistently with his plan of action, drew away a little to avoid undue risks. The *Scharnhorst* had by this time been hit on several occasions, but had not been disabled, though she broke off the action; and, at ten minutes past two, the fight became a chase again, the *Invincible* reopening fire at a quarter to three. For eight minutes, again out-ranging them, the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* hammered the two German cruisers, forcing them round to port once more to reply as best they could. The heavier British guns had now begun definitely to tell, however, and the *Scharnhorst* was already on fire forward. "We hit again and again," wrote Midshipman John Esmonde in a letter to his father after the action. "First our left gun sent her big crane spinning over the side. Then our right gun blew her funnel to atoms, and then another shot from the left gun sent her bridge and part of the forecastle sky-high. We were not escaping free, however. Shots were hitting us repeatedly, and the spray from the splashes of their shells was hiding the *Scharnhorst* from us. . . . Down came the range—11,000, 10,000, 9,000, to 8,800. — We were hitting the *Scharnhorst* very nearly every time. One beauty from our right gun got one of her turrets fair and square and sent it whistling over the side. Suddenly our right gun misfired—we had got a jamb and one gun was out of action. The breech had caught against one of the cages and would neither open nor shut. We opened up the trap hatch, and I jumped out, and down the ladder with two men to try and find a crowbar. The 12-inch guns were firing all round us, and our left gun was



doing work for two now that the right was jambed. The German shells were whistling unpleasantly close and there were splinters flying all over the place. The *Scharnhorst* was firing heavily, but I could see she was in a bad way. She was down by the bows and badly on fire amidships. I got the crowbar and brought it in, but they wanted a hacksaw as well, so I jumped out again, and just as I was coming back I saw the *Scharnhorst's* ensign dip (never knew whether it came down or not, because just then one of the lyddite shells hit her and there was a dense cloud of smoke all over her).<sup>\*</sup> When it cleared she was on her side, and her propellers were lashing the water round into foam. Then she capsized altogether, going to the bottom."

That was at a quarter past four; her consort the *Gneisenau* was still firing with all her guns; and, by this time, the old *Carnarvon* had at last arrived upon the scene—she had in fact fired a couple of shots at the *Scharnhorst*. The three cruisers, therefore, now turned their attention to the *Gneisenau*, who, after a moment's hesitation, turned and stood at bay. Nothing in the whole day, indeed, was more gallant than her vain but desperate resistance. At half-past four she was still straddling the *Invincible*, though without causing casualties or serious damage. A few minutes after five, her forward funnel was knocked out and remained lolling against the second. Seven minutes later, just as she hit the *Invincible*

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<sup>\*</sup>As a matter of fact, the *Scharnhorst's* ensign was not lowered, but, as Admiral Sturdee afterward remarked, "Von Spee met his fate like a brave Admiral, though our foe."



for the last time, she was herself badly damaged again between the third and fourth funnels; and how accurate the British fire had become can be gathered from the notebook of one of her officers, afterward rescued. "Five ten," he wrote, "hit, hit; 5:12, hit; 5:14, hit, hit, hit again; 5:20, after-turret gone; 5:40, hit, hit—on fire everywhere; 5:41, hit, hit—burning everywhere and sinking; 5:45, hit—men lying everywhere; 5:46, hit, hit."

Listing heavily to starboard, and with her engines stopped, Admiral Sturdee had ordered the "Cease Fire" signal at about half-past five. But, before it could be hoisted, the *Gneisenau* began to shoot again, though now only spasmodically and with a single gun. She seems to have fired, indeed, until her ammunition was exhausted, when, at ten minutes to six, Admiral Sturdee ordered the "Cease Fire" again and, twelve minutes later, she turned on her side. "Then at last," wrote another officer, "away first and second cutters, man sea-boat. For the *Gneisenau* is heeling right over on her side in the water. The beggars are done for. All our efforts will now be to save life, having done our utmost for five hours to destroy it. . . . Three of our boats are away picking up survivors. The *Inflexible's* boats are doing the same, and so are the *Carnarvon's*. The sea, which, so different from its state at noonday, is now quite angry, is strewn with floating wreckage supporting drowning men. To add to the misery, a drizzling rain is falling. We cast overboard every rope's end we can, and try our hands at casting to some wretch feebly struggling within a few yards of

the ship's side. Missed him! Another shot. He's farther off now! Ah! The rope isn't long enough. No good, try someone else. He's sunk now. . . . Many such do we see. Now we lend a hand hauling at a rope, pulling some poor devil out of the water. As they are hauled on deck they are taken below into the wardroom ante-room, or the Admiral's spare cabin. Here with knives we tear off their dripping clothing. Then with towels we try to start a little warmth in their ice-cold bodies. They are trembling, violently trembling from the iciness of their immersion. Some of them had stuck it for thirty minutes in a temperature of 35 degrees Fahrenheit!"

"The *Invincible* alone," reported Admiral Sturdee, "rescued 108 men, fourteen of whom were found to be dead after being brought on board. These men were buried at sea the following day with full military honours." Few will say that they were undeserved.

By now the battle had been distributed over many leagues of sea; the units engaged were not only out of sight of each other, but even beyond the sound of each other's guns; and it is time to return to Captain Luce in his war-scarred *Glasgow*, who, with the *Kent* and *Cornwall*, was pursuing the three light cruisers. More perhaps than to any others of the officers and crews engaged did their part in this struggle mean to those of the *Glasgow*. The sole survivors of Coronel, they had lived, as none of their comrades had done, for a bitter five weeks, with the picture of it before them. When all would fain have stayed and fought to the last, they had been compelled, in the interests of their service, to take the harder way.

They had a peculiar debt to discharge, and now, if they could but seize it, their hour had come to repay it with interest.

It was at about twenty minutes past one when the three German cruisers had broken away toward the southwest, the *Dresden* leading with the *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig* following her on each quarter. The distance then separating them from the *Glasgow*, *Kent*, and *Cornwall*, was from nine to eleven miles; all were speedy, the *Dresden* being the fastest; and a long, stern chase therefore ensued. Of the three British cruisers, the *Glasgow*, in spite of her late experiences, was still considerably the swiftest; and she soon drew away from them, overhauling the *Leipzig* and *Nürnberg*, until at three o'clock she was within seven miles of the former. Her idea was now, if possible, so to outrange the *Leipzig* as to turn and delay her until the arrival of the *Kent* and *Cornwall*, far slower vessels even than the *Leipzig*, but carrying fourteen 6-inch guns to the *Glasgow's* two. At three o'clock, therefore, she opened fire with her 6-inch guns, and, for more than an hour, engaged the *Leipzig* until the arrival of the *Cornwall*. By that time she had already hit her many times over, but had had to draw away on several occasions, owing to the accuracy of the *Leipzig's* gunners. With time and speed and the range on his side, Captain Luce, like his admiral, could afford to be deliberate; and yet even so, with a little more luck, the *Leipzig* might have damaged the *Glasgow* rather severely. Two of her officers stationed in the control-top had a very narrow escape from losing their lives, a shell passing between them,

and carrying away the hand of a signalman—three other men being wounded and one killed at about the same time. After an hour and a quarter, and having had an early tea, the *Cornwall* arrived on the scene, and was soon, as one of the *Glasgow's* seamen admitted, “shooting very well.”

We have last seen the *Cornwall*, not wholly to her liking, upon the quarter of the even slower *Carnarvon*; but, a little after noon, to her great satisfaction, she had received orders to go ahead. When the three light cruisers had broken to the south in their endeavour to escape, she had turned after them, as we have said, with her sister ship, the *Kent*, in the wake of the nimbler *Glasgow*. Now, thanks to the *Glasgow* and the superhuman efforts of their two engine-room staffs, both the *Kent* and *Cornwall* were at last in action, the former being ordered in pursuit of the *Nürnberg*—where we may leave her for a moment performing imperishable conjuring-tricks in the way of stoking and engine-driving, while her luckier consorts, already at close grips, were battering the *Leipzig* to pieces.

At twenty minutes to five, a shot from the *Cornwall*, at a range of between four and five miles, carried away her foremast; but, ten minutes later, after delivering a broadside, and as she was being hit herself, the *Cornwall* drew away a little. The *Leipzig* had now lost one of her funnels as well as being on fire aft, many of her guns being already silenced; but at six o'clock she was still firing well enough to hit the *Cornwall* severely and once more to force the latter away a little. This was only for a moment,

however, the *Cornwall* reopening with lyddite shell at a quarter past six, and now pressing her attack home with tremendous force and accuracy to a range of less than three miles. In this the *Glasgow* joined her—it being obviously useless now to hunt for the *Dresden* miles away in the mist—and, by ten minutes to seven, the *Leipzig* was on fire everywhere, though her flag was still flying and her guns occasionally responding. The two British cruisers then stopped firing for a little, but dared not draw near for fear of a torpedo-attack. Blazing in every corner, with her sides red hot, and with great gaps in her torn by the lyddite, it seemed now that every moment must be the *Leipzig's* last; but still she floated and would not strike her colours. Fire was again reopened, therefore, although, as one of the *Cornwall's* officers said, "We all hated doing it," and, half an hour later, she sent up a couple of rockets signifying that she surrendered and asking for help.

What her condition was then has been vividly described by Private Whittaker of the Royal Marine Light Infantry. "When we went right close," he wrote to his mother, "she looked just like a night-watchman's fire bucket, all holes and fire." Searchlights were now playing upon her through the rain and darkness, but, in view of possible explosions, the boats could not approach too near; out of her crew of over three hundred, less than a score were saved; and, at just about nine o'clock, she rolled over to port, seemed to recover a moment, and then slipped out of sight.

So perished the *Leipzig*, not less gallantly, but as condignly as the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, news of



whose destruction had been wirelessly to the *Cornwall* and *Glasgow*. Whatever might happen now, victory was assured; the *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* had been amply avenged; and to the *Cornwall* and *Glasgow*, buffeting home to Port Stanley, few happier moments were likely to come. Into the feelings of Captain Luce it would be impertinent to pry; but a little may be guessed, perhaps, from what follows. "About half an hour ago," said one of his crew, writing home on December 11th, "the Captain made a speech, or rather tried to, but failed. He first of all read out the King's message to the Fleet, and then tried to say a few words himself; 'I have seen the *Glasgow's* ship's company fight twice, and I thank you for the way in which you fought. I couldn't have a better ship's company.' Then he said, 'I can't say any more.'"

That is to leap forward, however, three days and to leave the *Kent* still ploughing after the *Nürnberg*—out of sight of everybody now and with the impossible task of making a doubtful 20-knot vessel catch one five knots faster; and not only overtake her, but bring her to action, with the weather changing and darkness not far off. But to the engine-room staff of the *Kent* and to her stokers no less than to Captain Allen—"Sink-her" Allen, they called him—the word impossible, for to-night at least, might not be whispered with impunity. There was the *Nürnberg* flushed from Coronel, and here was the *Kent* with her fourteen good guns; coal might be short and the engines in their second childhood, but if those guns did not find the *Nürnberg*, it would not be the fault of the engine-room. First out of harbour in the



early morning, a spirit of extreme cheerfulness seems to have reigned in the *Kent* from the beginning of the action. Thus, at half-past ten, we find her officers drinking the toast of *Deutschland unter Alles* in sloe-gin. Soon afterward they lunched; and then—as many of them as could be spared—established themselves on the top of the forward gun-turret to watch the fun.

This was christened “the stalls” and seems to have been well patronized till half-past one when they went to Action Stations again. Falling out at twenty minutes past two, watch was resumed from the bridge, which then became known as “the upper circle.” At five minutes to four tea was served in the gun-room, and, twenty minutes later, Action Stations were taken up again. At that time the *Leipzig* and *Nürnberg* were well in view, with the *Dresden* almost out of sight on the horizon—the *Leipzig* on the starboard bow, nearer at hand, and being engaged by the *Glasgow*, and a moment afterward by the *Cornwall*, and the *Nürnberg* away to port and considerably more distant. Then came the order to pursue the latter, the *Leipzig* being given a salvo or two in passing; and it was then that there began the race that was destined to become traditional in every engine-room of the navy. With no coal to spare, everything combustible was crammed into her long-suffering furnaces. Tables and chairs, officers’ furniture, wooden companion-ladders, even planks from the deck, were knocked to pieces and thrust into the flames for the ultimate destruction of the *Nürnberg*.

“The entire staff,” afterward wrote one of her

engineer officers, "was doing its best, and, my word, it was a best. We pushed her along, more, more, more. The revolutions of the engines at the first time of starting were more than the revolutions the dockyard could get out of her, and she was worked up gently bit by bit, easing down occasionally when things looked as if they were not going quite right, or when they threatened to do so. An anxious moment was reached when we got on every ounce of steam that the engines could take. We were just then going some sixteen revolutions a minute faster than the Admiralty full power, and also the designed power of 22,000 horse-power, some 5,000 horse-power more than we ought to have done. In times of peace we should have been court-martialled for this, but we came out top. . . . We were doing from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 knots faster than the old *Kent* had ever done before. We were doing over 25 knots 'full speed,' the highest ever attained being 22 knots."

Fortunately for the *Kent*, too, the *Nürnberg* had her own boiler troubles, but they were of a different order, and she was unable to make her usual speed; and, after about an hour, the *Kent* was near enough to open fire at a range of a little over six miles. It was now the gunners' opportunity, and though they were reservists, drawn, as one of the officers put it, "from all sorts of weird places," they rose to the occasion, like first-class experts, and found their target almost at once. Nor could Captain Allen afford himself the license that had been the right policy for the other commanders. It was now past five; rain was falling; his supply of combustible bric-à-brac was

strictly limited. It was a case of now or never, and the *Kent*, taking her punishment as it came, pushed the action for all she was worth.

With her foretop shot away down to the crows' nest, and her silk ensign cut to ribbons; with her wireless knocked out, so that she could no longer send, though she was still able to receive, messages; with half a dozen holes through her funnels and several more in her side—she gained a quarter of a mile with every salvo until she was pounding the *Nürnberg* at less than three miles distance. Struck in all thirty-six times, and with five men killed and eleven wounded, the behaviour of all on board was, in their captain's own words, "perfectly magnificent"—a typical example being that of Sergeant Mayes, whose courage and presence of mind probably saved the ship.

A bursting shell had started a fire among some cordite charges in the casemate. A tongue of flame had leaped down the hoist and into the ammunition passage, endangering the magazine. Without an instant's pause, and although severely burned, Sergeant Mayes picked up a cordite charge and threw it away, afterward flooding the compartment and putting out a fire that had started in some neighbouring empty shell bags. No wonder that Captain Allen, writing afterward to the Association of Men at Kent, should have said that "though the enemy fought bravely to the very end, against such men as I have the honour to command, they never could have had a chance."

By half-past six, the *Nürnberg* was on fire forward,

all her guns being apparently silenced, and the *Kent* ceased shelling her, and drew up within two miles. Her flag was still flying, however, and the *Kent* opened fire again, but only for a few minutes longer, when the *Nürnberg* hauled her flag down and made signs of surrender. She was now blazing furiously, and listing heavily to starboard; and the *Kent* began to take measures to save life. Unfortunately all her boats had been holed by the *Nürnberg's* fire, and, before she could launch them, they had to be repaired. Two were quickly patched up, but the crews were only successful in saving a dozen men, five of whom afterward died on board from the effects of wounds and exposure.

To complete the victory of this single-ship action everyone on board had contributed his utmost, but it seems probable that in history the larger share of the credit will be given unstintingly to the engineers and stokers. It was certainly bestowed on them by their comrades in the *Kent*. 'The captain,' we are told, "nearly fell on the engineer-commander's neck and kissed him when he 'blew up' after the action to see him and to advise as to the best speed to go back to harbour. He nearly shouted at him for some time: 'My dear fellow, my dear engineer-commander! You won the action, you did it splendid! Without your speed we should have lost everything.'"

Meanwhile, at Port Stanley, now in wireless communication with all the rest of Admiral Sturdee's squadron, the silence of the *Kent*, owing to her broken wireless, had begun to give rise to some alarm. "*Kent Kent, Kent,*" rang the invisible call, but there was no

reply, and it was feared that she had been lost. It was perhaps characteristic that, in spite of this, she was the first of them all to reach port the next day.

Of von Spee's squadron only the *Dresden* remained, to be run to earth three months later. The *Bristol* and *Macedonia*, after capturing their crews, had sunk the *Santa Isabel* and the *Baden*; and the total British casualties in killed and wounded amounted to less than thirty.

## CHAPTER V

### BACK TO THE NORTH SEA

"Our trawlers mined the fairway,  
Our cruisers spread the bait,  
We shelled the Briton's seaside towns  
To lure him to his fate,  
We set the trap twice over,  
We left him with his dead—"  
"But now we'll play another game,"  
The British sailor said.

WITH the destruction of von Spee's squadron nothing of Germany's navy was left at large in the outer seas save one or two cruisers and armed merchantmen, whose days of freedom were already numbered. Of these the survivor of the Falkland Islands' Battle, the *Dresden*, was destroyed in the following March at Juan Fernandez; the *Königsberg*, bottled up in the Rufiji River in Africa, was finally disposed of a few months later; while the *Kronprinz Wilhelm*, the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich*, and the *Karlsruhe* met with various fates during the same summer. That in spite of the enormous calls upon the navy in the way of convoying transports they were joined by no others from their home waters is the best tribute to the efficiency of our floating cordon in the North Sea. And yet its very success in this respect was largely responsible, perhaps, for a some-



what distorted picture of the actual position—that of a sulky and immobilized German Fleet confronted with an impenetrable British barrier.

That would have been hardly true even of each side's surface ships; but it was as far as possible from the complete reality. For what had in fact begun with the outbreak of war—what had never ceased day or night—was a desperate and unceasing battle, none the less crucial because it was so often silent. Some hint of its real nature might have been gathered from the laconic Admiralty announcement, a day or two after war had been declared, that the German passenger steamer, *Königin Luise*, had been sunk, while mine-laying, by one of our destroyer patrols; and this vessel had been at work, fortunately with very little result, upon a subtle and long-prepared scheme of action. It is true that after she had been sunk, the cruiser *Amphion*—the leader of the Harwich Patrol that sank her—herself went down on one of the *Königin Luise's* mines; but the larger end aimed at remained unachieved.

This was no less than the mining in of Harwich, and was part of a deliberate and extensive plan, not only to cripple the northward progress of our larger squadrons to their war-stations, but to block the entrances of as many as possible of our chief naval bases. That some such policy would be attempted had, of course, long been foreseen. Germany's recalcitrant attitude at the Hague Conference toward the question of mine-laying had pointedly suggested this; and it was known that, prior to the outbreak of war, she had accumulated a store of at least ten thousand

mines. To counter such measures steps had already been taken in the formation, a few years previously, of a trawler section of the Royal Naval Reserve, whose business it would be to keep the channels clear; while a group of old gun-boats had been assembled for the same purpose to act in conjunction with the Grand Fleet.

It had become instantly clear, however, that the original provision of eighty-two trawlers would be insufficient; and, by the end of August, this had been increased to 250—to be yet further and immensely added to as the busy months went by. Nothing in our naval record, indeed, was more dramatic or so signal an evidence of the national sense of admiralty than the gathering together of that vast auxiliary service of fishermen, pilots, and amateur yachtsmen, and the enormous responsibilities thrust into their hands to be so efficiently and light-heartedly carried. Time after time, by the resource of our fishermen, of sea-loving undergraduates, of amateurs of all sorts, what might have been disasters of the first magnitude were averted or overcome. Between the navy proper, with its thousands of other problems, and these new and insidious dangers—the laying of minefields by apparently innocent neutrals, the ever-present activities of enemy submarines—the courage, the cunning, the native sea-instinct of these otherwise untrained forces was the buffer. The fishermen of Galilee became fishers of men. The fishermen of Britain became fishers of mincs. And the debt of human freedom to the latter is not immeasurably less, perhaps, than to their predecessors.

This was the true picture then of the North Sea—an area nearly three times the size of Great Britain—a Grand Fleet holding the exits and entrances against every possible sortie in force, but itself so threatened by submarines and minefields that at one time its war-stations were actually changed, and so nearly paralyzed that there were not a few hours when considerable units of it were practically embayed. Thus, definite minefields were laid by the enemy at Southwold, the mouth of the Tyne, and near Flamborough Head, and not only there but off the north of Ireland, where it was hoped to destroy or disorganize the Canadian transports. Nor were our most vital waters, such as those of the Firth of Forth, free from the repeated visits of those early submarines; and it is primarily as trapping expeditions, leading us into prepared minefields, and only secondarily as baby-killing bombardments, that such raids as those on Lowestoft, Gorleston, and Yarmouth must in reality be considered.

The first of these took place on November 3, 1914, the day following the Admiralty proclamation in which it had been announced that from November 5th the North Sea was to be considered a closed area. This had become necessary, as was then publicly indicated, owing to the persistent and indiscriminate sowing of mines; because peaceful merchant-ships had already been destroyed by these on the main trade-route between Liverpool and America; because these mines had been laid by vessels flying neutral flags; and because exceptional measures had in consequence now become imperative. For these reasons it was

announced, therefore, that all vessels passing, from the fifth of November onward, a line drawn from the northernmost point of the Hebrides through the Faroe Islands to Iceland would do so at their own peril. Traders to and from Norway, the Baltic, Denmark, and Holland, were advised to use the English Channel and the Straits of Dover, and were then assured that they would receive full sailing directions, and, as far as Great Britain could secure it, a safe passage.

Meanwhile, in every dockyard, work was being pushed forward upon all sorts of naval construction, and each new problem, as it arose, was being considered and vigorously dealt with. To guarantee, however, in all circumstances and at any given moment, the integrity of our whole coast-line was plainly impossible, though every month saw its increase of patrols and *personnel*; and, on December 16th, the enemy again bombarded three of our seaside towns.

These were Hartlepool, Whitby, and Scarborough, casualties being inflicted in every case. It was a foggy winter morning when three hostile cruisers were sighted off Hartlepool about 8 o'clock; and, a quarter of an hour later, the bombardment began, lasting till ten minutes to nine. The enemy agents in this case seem to have been two battle-cruisers and one armoured cruiser; and, though Hartlepool itself was an open town, land batteries in the neighbourhood endeavoured to reply. Their fire was ineffective, however; several soldiers attached to the Durham Light Infantry and Royal Engineers were killed and wounded; the gasworks were set on fire; and the civilian casualties amounted to nearly a hundred.

Almost at the same time, a battle-cruiser and armoured cruiser approached and shelled Scarborough, firing about sixty shots, while two battle-cruisers attacked Whitby, civilians in both towns being killed and wounded.

Owing to the objectives chosen, the conditions of the weather, the brevity of their visit, and their power and speed, the enemy squadrons made port intact again, though a patrol of destroyers very pluckily attacked them. In all nearly one hundred civilians were killed in these three towns, about five hundred being wounded; the military casualties amounted to thirty-four, and those on the three destroyers to twenty-eight. The German battle-cruisers employed in this expedition were identified as the *Derfflinger*, *Seydlitz*, *Moltke*, *von der Tann*, and *Blücher*, the three latter, it was believed, having been also engaged in the previous raid upon the Norfolk coast.

Though, as we have said, it was quite impossible to give an absolute guarantee against such incidents as these, they were certainly not soothing to the feelings of the Grand Fleet and least of all to those of its cruiser squadrons. In spite of the elaborate justifications voiced in the German Press by such writers as Count Reventlow, they had outraged every canon not only of international law but of decent seaman-like feeling, and were an early indication of the horrible license that German sea-policy was prepared to allow itself. That had not yet staggered the world, as the sinking of the *Lusitania* was to stagger it, or such incredible atrocities as that to be associated with the *Belgian Prince*; but it had opened up a vista to



every clean-hearted sailor sufficiently dark as to have changed the character of the war. It was now plain, for example, that such naval leaders as Admiral von Spee and the captain of the *Emden* were no longer to be regarded as typical of the directing minds of Germany's navy. How completely they were in the end to be disregarded was not yet manifest; but it was already clear that the old and peculiar amenities, the traditional chivalry of sea-warfare, were but poorly respected, even if they were understood, by this latest aspirant to sea-power. It was with a special satisfaction, therefore, that early on January 24, 1915, a strong patrolling fleet, under Sir David Beatty, received news of a powerful enemy squadron not far away to the south-south-east.

This consisted, as soon became clear, of the *Derfflinger*, *Seydlitz*, *Moltke*, and *Blücher*, with six light cruisers and a strong force of destroyers; and there was little doubt that they were once more *en route* for a bombardment of some part of our coast. With Admiral Beatty, who was flying his flag on the *Lion*, were the *Princess Royal*, the *Tiger*, the *New Zealand*, and *Indomitable*, all powerful vessels, the three former each carrying eight 13.5-inch guns, while the *New Zealand* and *Indomitable* carried the same number of 12-inch guns. In company with these, disposed on their port beam, were the light cruisers *Southampton*, *Nottingham*, *Birmingham*, and *Lowestoft*, and, scouting ahead—the two squadrons having met at sea—were Commodore Tyrwhitt in the *Arethusa*, commanding three flotillas of destroyers, and the two light cruisers *Aurora* and *Undaunted*.



It was Sunday morning; the day had broken clear at about a quarter to seven, and it was a few minutes after this hour that the *Aurora*, then travelling at twenty knots, sighted a two-masted, four-funnelled cruiser accompanied by some destroyers. Half concealed by her smoke, in the uncertain light, and at about four miles distance, the *Aurora*, for a few moments, had been unable to determine her nationality; and it was for these reasons that the enemy cruiser—afterward known to be the *Kolberg*—was the first to open fire. No appreciable damage was caused to the *Aurora*, however, who replied immediately and with such good effect that, five minutes later, the *Kolberg* changed course and retired upon the stronger enemy forces that had now become visible. The presence of these had at once been signalled to Admiral Beatty and his cruisers, and the whole squadron at once worked up to its full speed of  $28\frac{1}{2}$  knots. When first sighted, the enemy vessels had been steering northwest, but they immediately changed their course to the southeast, the distance separating the two squadrons being then about fourteen miles, and their position, at half-past seven, being about thirty miles from the English coast.

From the outset it had been evident that the enemy did not mean to engage, and that, if he were to be brought to action, it would only be after a chase; and, although as a squadron we had the advantage in speed, our superiority was not very great. Nor was Admiral Beatty's problem in any other respect so simple as had been Sir Doveton Sturdee's. Not only had Admiral Beatty always to bear in mind

that he might be being led into some recently laid minefield, but he knew that with every hour he would be nearly forty miles nearer to the heavily guarded waters on the other side. Moreover, he had at all times to be prepared for a torpedo-attack from the accompanying fleet of enemy destroyers, while it was practically certain that, before the action ended, he would find himself in the presence of hostile submarines. He was further at a disadvantage in that, though he was stronger in gun power, he was forced to rely upon bow fire only, and this while travelling at full speed. That meant that, for the greater part of the action, his leading battle-cruisers, the *Lion*, *Tiger*, and *Princess Royal* could only bring to bear four of their 13.5-inch guns, while the *Seydlitz* and *Moltke*, firing astern, could each use eight of their 11-inch guns, the *Derfflinger* four of her 12-inch guns, and the *Blücher* six of her 8.2's. It became a matter of margins, therefore—and not very extensive ones—both in speed and range, and of the British capacity to use these in the limited time before the German cruisers could reach their own waters.

Some idea of what this meant can best be gathered, perhaps, from the fact that, though travelling at thirty knots, it was almost an hour and a half—during which time more than fifty miles of sea had been covered—before the fourteen miles that separated the two squadrons had been reduced to ten. This was just before nine o'clock, the enemy being still on Admiral Beatty's port bow, his light cruisers ahead, followed by the *Derfflinger*, *Moltke*, *Seydlitz*, and *Blücher* in single line, with a large number of destroy-

ers on their starboard beam. Leading in the *Lion*, Sir David Beatty was followed by the *Tiger*, the *Princess Royal*, and the *New Zealand*, the latter and the *Indomitable*—both slower vessels—having broken all records, thanks to their engine-room staffs.

Already a shot or two had been fired from the *Lion*'s forward guns, taking the *Blücher* as her target, and, a few minutes after nine, she made her first hit on this cruiser, carrying away her bridge, according to the prisoners afterward taken. At this range, with her 13.5's tilted at an angle of some sixteen degrees and her big shells dropping steeply, the fire of the *Lion* seems, under the circumstances, to have been remarkably accurate. About ten minutes later, the *Tiger* came into range and took up the attack on the *Blücher*, the *Lion* transferring her attentions to the *Seydlitz*, the next ahead. Meanwhile the enemy had begun to respond but without inflicting any damage, and, a quarter of an hour later, the *Princess Royal* was able to join in the chorus, also taking the *Blücher* for her first target.

The *Blücher*, slower than her consorts, and already heavily damaged, was now dropping astern and came under the guns of the *New Zealand*, the *Princess Royal* transferring her fire to the *Seydlitz* with immediate and visible results. The enemy's destroyers were now throwing up dense columns of smoke to screen his wounded battle-cruisers; but, by a quarter to ten, not only the *Blücher*, but the *Derfflinger* and *Seydlitz* were on fire. Our own light cruisers and destroyer flotillas had fallen back to port a little so as not to obscure the range; and the position just

before ten exhibited the *Lion* confining her attentions to the *Derfflinger*, the *Tiger* attacking the *Derfflinger*, and, when this was hidden from her by smoke, the doomed and swiftly-flagging *Blücher*, the *Princess Royal* shelling the *Seydlitz*, and the *New Zealand* engaging the *Blücher*—the *Indomitable*, in spite of her efforts, not having yet drawn within effective range.

The condition of the *Blücher*, as was afterward learned from prisoners, though it was to become worse, was already terrible enough. Early in the action her electric plant had been destroyed, and her men down below crept in darkness. Still too far to be raked, her decks were being excavated by half-ton shells dropping from the sky. In the narrow spaces below, apart from the shattering shell fragments, the enormous air-displacement wrought destruction and death. Iron plates were moulded by it as if they had been wax, and men tossed like apples and crushed to pulp against them. Later, as the range narrowed, the *Blücher* became more helpless, and, as she came under the full force of the British broadside fire, she staggered at each salvo, scarcely recovering before another hurled her again on her side.

But the main battle had now swept on; and the fact that the *Blücher* was left to her fate is the best indication, perhaps, of the injuries already sustained by her speedier and stronger consorts. It was not until a quarter to eleven, however, that the *Blücher*, then far astern, definitely turned north out of the line; and, before this had happened, the German light cruisers and destroyers had closed in from the starboard and were threatening a torpedo attack. The

British light forces were accordingly ordered up to prevent this, the *Lion* and *Tiger* also opening upon the enemy destroyers. The attack never materialized, however; was possibly only a feint; and would in any case have been checkmated by the admirable handling of the *M* division of destroyers under Captain the Hon H. Meade, and particularly, perhaps, of the destroyer *Meteor* under Lieutenant Frederick Peters.

This destroyer, with the *Lion* and *Tiger*, was the only British vessel to suffer material damage; and her position at one time, in the full field of bombardment, was one that her crew are never likely to forget. This was soon after eleven, when the *Lion*, who had drawn more than her namesake's share of the German fire, had been struck by a chance shot that reduced her speed to ten knots an hour. The rest of the destroyers and light cruisers had by this time dropped astern again, the majority on the starboard or disengaged side, while others, on the port side, had turned northward after the *Blücher*. After the *Lion* had been hit, however, the *Meteor* was ordered up to cover her, thereby steaming under the salvos from both sides; and it is possible to glean an idea or two of what this meant from the account of it afterward written by one of her officers.

"We were absolutely in the line of fire," he said, "shells whistling over and all around us, and now and again an enemy's broadside aimed directly at us. Try and imagine a frail destroyer steaming thirty knots, with four battle-cruisers on either side belching forth flame and smoke continually, the screech of the



projectiles flying overhead seeming to tear the very air into ribbons, 12-inch shells dropping perilously near, and raising columns of water a hundred feet into the air, a few yards away, the spray washing our decks and drenching all hands. Picture the awful crashing noise, the explosions and flashes, as shots took effect, the massive tongues of fire shooting up, and the dense clouds of yellow and black smoke which obliterated the whole ship from view as the shells burst on striking. And this, if you can imagine it, will give you some idea of the *Meteor's* position in a glorious action. Its terrible imposing grandeur made one forget personal danger. Of course, something had to happen. It was simply inevitable. About eleven o'clock, the *Lion* drew out of the line temporarily, the *Princess Royal* taking the lead, and it was not till then that the *Indomitable* opened fire and took her part in the engagement. We had already been hit a couple of times, but without doing any material damage, and half of us missed death by inches; but it seemed as if we possessed a charmed life; it is truly miraculous, nothing less, that we continued so long without being disabled; but Providence must have been with us that day. Just about this time, the *Blücher* was in a terrible state; one funnel gone, the other two like scrap-iron and tottering, both fore and main topmasts shot away, fore turret carried clean over the side, and only part of her mainmast and fore tripod mast left standing, and even these in a very shaky condition. So she fell out of the line—a raging furnace amidships, helpless, unable to steam; and her sister ships left her to her



fate. The battering she had undergone was something incredible, and she was in her death agony now, so we began to close her, and found she was settling down, though still on an even keel. Now was our chance. We approached her, circling around, but even then she was not dead, for, at precisely 12.5 p.m., with the very last round she ever fired, she sent an 8.2-inch shell into us, which killed four men and wounded another. But what a sweet revenge was to come! Two minutes later, we discharged our torpedo. It hit her nearly amidships. There was a tremendously violent shock. She heeled completely over and sank in eight and a half minutes, hundreds of men clambering over her sides and standing there, just as if it were the upper deck, waiting for the final plunge."

Not to be outdone, and consistent with her reputation, the *Arethusa* was also in at the death, and had in her turn loosed a couple of torpedoes at the *Blücher* with terrific effect—one striking her aft and one forward, reaching her magazine and causing a violent explosion. It was the *Arethusa*, too, who subsequently embarked and brought home to port the majority of the *Blücher's* survivors, the rescuers and rescued being alike bombed from the air by a German aeroplane that had appeared on the scene.

Meanwhile the *Lion*, having pulled out of the line, not vitally injured, but unfit for further action, the *Tiger*, *Princess Royal*, and *New Zealand* had continued the chase of the flying enemy, the *Indomitable* having been detailed to attend to the *Blücher*. Round the wounded *Lion*, to protect her from submarine attack

—submarines had already been sighted a few minutes before—had closed one of our light cruisers and six destroyers, and, at half-past eleven, Admiral Beatty called the destroyer *Attack* alongside, boarded her, and raced at full speed after his other three battle-cruisers.

So fast was the pace at which the action was being fought that not only were these out of sight, but the *Blücher*, now in her death throes, was also below the horizon. With her guns tilted, as she listed there to port, and the “Engage the enemy more closely” signal still flying from her mast, the *Lion* had been suddenly wiped off the slate, as it were, with what chagrin to those on board can be readily imagined. But for that unlucky shot, the Battle of the Dogger Bank might have been as complete a victory of its kind as that of the Falkland Islands, and it was only by a hair’s breadth that the other three German battle-cruisers, lame and heavily damaged, contrived to reach harbour.

Headlong as he was travelling, it was not till noon that Sir David Beatty met his returning cruisers, and, twenty minutes later, having shifted his flag from the *Attack* to the *Princess Royal*, he heard from Captain Osmond de B. Brock of what had subsequently happened; that the *Blücher* had been sunk near Borkum Reef, a Zeppelin and aeroplane bombing the vessels rescuing survivors; and that the other cruisers had made their escape in an eastward direction. It was owing to the increasing danger from mines thrown out of the fleeing vessels, and the growing proximity of the German minefields, that the ac-

tion had in the end been broken off; and whether it should, under those circumstances, have been pressed further must remain an open question. That quite apart, however, from its material advantages in the sinking of the *Blücher* and the disabling of her consorts, the victory of the Dogger Bank had important moral results there is not a shadow of doubt. It had once more re-affirmed the value of the battle-cruiser for which the navy was chiefly indebted to Lord Fisher, and it proved to be the grave of the big-scale raids upon our open east coast towns. More than all that, however, it was a triumphant example of an instantly seized opportunity; it demonstrated to the enemy that, in spite of his mines and submarines, we maintained our full tactical liberty; and it was further evidence that in Admiral Beatty we had found a naval leader of the highest class.

Those were the recognitions behind the "Well done, David" of the *Princess Royal's* coal-blackened stokers as the Admiral climbed in mid-sea from the little *Attack* into the famous cruiser; and they spoke again, on the following Tuesday morning, when the *Lion* limped up the Firth to her anchorage. Three miles away, in the Fifeshire valleys, ploughman and farmboy heard those welcoming syrens.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SEAMEN AT GALLIPOLI

AT THE outbreak of war, Germany was represented in the Mediterranean by two vessels, the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, more likely, perhaps, to become historical than any two that she will ever build. Both were modern vessels, the *Goeben*, a first-class battle-cruiser, carrying ten 11-inch guns and capable of 28 knots, and the *Breslau*, a light cruiser of about the same speed and with twelve 4.1-inch guns. Outside the Adriatic, these were the only hostile men-of-war with which the Allies in the Mediterranean had to reckon; and, though full allowance must be made for the responsibilities entailed in preventing a sortie of the Austrian Navy, in conveying troops from Algeria to France, and in avoiding the least infringement of neutral waters, the escape of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* must still be regarded as a disaster to our arms.

On August 4th, before the declaration of war between Germany and Great Britain, but after France and Germany had already begun hostilities, the *Goeben* and *Breslau* had shelled Phillippeville and Bona, two Algerian ports belonging to France, and had returned to Messina in Sicily on August 5th. Here they obtained coal from vessels in the harbour,

the Italian authorities refusing, under the laws of neutrality, to allow them facilities for coaling ashore, and, by the same rule, they had to leave territorial waters within twenty-four hours. Their movements and whereabouts had, of course, been known throughout to Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne in command of the British Mediterranean Fleet; and now, being free to attack them, he was awaiting their departure, together with a subsidiary squadron under Rear-Admiral E. C. T. Troubridge. The German admiral and his officers had no illusions as to the destiny that awaited them when they put to sea; made their wills; and steamed out of harbour on the evening of August 6th. Their design, it was believed, was to rush the Straits of Otranto and join up with the Austrian Fleet in the Adriatic. The paramount importance of not affording Italy the least pretext of complaint seems to have weighed heavily on the British admirals. The *Goeben* and *Breslau*, heading apparently for the Straits, suddenly changed course for the southeast; and, though the light cruiser *Gloucester*, which had kept in touch with them, immediately notified this and went gallantly in pursuit, the superior power and speed of the two German cruisers enabled them to fight her off and make good their escape.

They passed through the Dardanelles on August 10th, and, three days later, were said to have been bought by the Turkish Government, by whose officers and crews they were in future to be manned. Sir Berkeley Milne was recalled for an inquiry, the senior French officer, Admiral Boué de Lapeyrère, taking his place as Commander of the combined British and



French forces, on August 30th; and, on September 20th, Rear-Admiral Troubridge also returned home. At his own request, he was court-martialled on November 5th, Admirals Sir Hedworth Meux and Sir George Callaghan conducting the inquiry, and, on November 12th, it was announced that he had been acquitted of all blame. Sir Berkeley Milne was also exonerated as the result of an Admiralty investigation.

So ended an episode in which, from the strictly naval standpoint, and though our leaders in the Mediterranean were held free from blame, it must be admitted that the honours rested with the German admiral and the perspicacity of his advisers in Berlin. Whether or no the arrival at Constantinople of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* was the determining factor in the Turkish Government's policy; how, if they had been sunk by us, that Government might have acted; and the effect on the situation that they had created of a prompter and more drastic action on our own part—these matters can never probably be accurately determined. On the other hand, it is clear that, both in material and moral effect, their presence was an enormous asset to German diplomacy; and that, indirectly at any rate, our campaign in Gallipoli, with all its consequences, derived from them. On September 27th, Turkey closed the Dardanelles; on October 31st, she declared war; and, three days later, on instructions from the Admiralty, but without reference to the War Council, certain units of the Mediterranean Fleet shelled the outer forts of the Dardanelles. In the light of after events, this was



undoubtedly an error, but it was undertaken at the time with the purpose of ascertaining the effective range of the protecting Turkish guns.

Now to obtain a fair picture of the operations at Gallipoli that were afterward undertaken—operations in the first place wholly naval, but finally predominantly military—it is necessary to return for a moment to London and to study the general background against which they must be viewed. Here, after all, were the two or three brains upon which, as a whole, our strategy depended; and it is interesting to note how the mechanism through which they acted had become moulded and modified by the stress of war. For it must be remembered that, after those admirable dispositions, long considered and provided for by the Committee of Imperial Defence, had been undertaken—after not only the navy and army, but every affected department had gone, as it were, to its war-stations—an era followed that is best to be described as the era of improvisation.

No such war had been fought upon the earth's surface, and each succeeding day opened a new prospect. With every branch of both services discovering strange and imperative needs; with no section of our national life that was failing to experience some fresh dislocation—it was little wonder that, in the various higher executives, changes and experiments in change should have been found necessary. Many, perhaps most of these, were proved to be inadequate, and replaced by others as the war went on. Others were doomed from the first and should never have been embarked upon. It had been so arranged, for

example, at the War Office, that most of the General Staff officers should take commands in the field; and, when Lord Kitchener became Secretary for War, the General Staff practically ceased to exist.

Accustomed to self-reliance, to centralization even in the minutest details, Lord Kitchener assumed powers so various and important, as it was impossible for any one man to wield; and, to some extent, though not to such an extreme, a similar process had set in at the Admiralty. Instead of the Board of Admiralty, consisting of the First Lord, the four Sea Lords, the two Civil Lords, the Parliamentary and Permanent Secretaries, there had come into being a War Staff Group, including the First Lord and the First Sea Lord (but none of the other Sea Lords), the Chief of Staff, the Permanent Secretary, a Naval Secretary, and Sir Arthur Wilson—the latter, “Tug” Wilson, as he was called, although retired, being regarded as one of our greatest naval strategists. That was the composition in November, 1914, of the real directorate of the navy, Lord Fisher, who succeeded Prince Louis of Battenburg, on October 30th, being First Sea Lord.

As in the War Office and Admiralty, a similar kind of change had become observable in the Cabinet. Theoretically the direction of the war rested, of course, in the hands of this body, assisted in their deliberations by the Committee of Imperial Defense. Practically both the Cabinet and the Committee of Imperial Defense fell more and more into abeyance, the conduct of the war passing into the hands of a new and smaller body, known as the War Council.

This consisted of the Prime Minister, then Mr. Asquith, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, the Secretary of State for India, the Marquis of Crewe, the Secretary for War, Lord Kitchener, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Winston Churchill. Of these, however, the main responsibility rested upon Mr. Asquith, Mr. Churchill, and Lord Kitchener. This was in practice the triumvirate then conducting the war, as far as the British Empire was concerned, and each of the three was a man of strong and outstanding personality. In Mr. Asquith the country was being served by a statesman of very typical English qualities, imperturbable, perhaps a little slow-moving, magnanimous, shrewd, and of great intellectual capacity. In Mr. Churchill the Admiralty had at its head a man of brilliant and impulsive mentality, complete physical and moral fearlessness, and a somewhat headstrong initiative. In Lord Kitchener there had come to the War Office the foremost soldier of the Empire, the man who had been recalled by an irresistible popular appeal from the governorship of Egypt, in whose name the new armies, voluntarily recruited from every social rank, had outrun equipment, ammunition, even places to be lodged in—a man who already, in his sixty-fourth year, had become an almost legendary figure, the liberator of the Sudan, Roberts' successor in South Africa, the administrator of India and Egypt, omnivorous of work, relentless, silent, and the public's beau-ideal of personal efficiency.

But, while of these three, it was little wonder that,

politics apart, Lord Kitchener predominated, another figure, scarcely less powerful, and hardly second as a national idol, stood, as it were, at the elbow of this inner triumvirate in the person of Lord Fisher. The maker of the modern navy, and, in an even more vital sphere, as authoritative an influence as Lord Kitchener, at the age of seventy he had returned to the Admiralty with an almost equal popular approval. He had not, however, as had Lord Kitchener, an actual place in the War Council; and he was not, of course, present at many of its meetings.

This was the position at home, then, when, at a gathering of the War Council, held on November 25th, it was suggested by Mr. Churchill that the best way to defend Egypt was to attack some part of Turkey's Asiatic coast, and that an occupation of the Gallipoli Peninsula would give us the control of the Dardanelles and put Constantinople at our mercy—the idea in Mr. Churchill's mind being evidently that of a combined naval and military movement on a big scale. That some such attack on the Turkish lines of communication might eventually become desirable Lord Kitchener agreed. He did not consider, however, that the time had arrived for it; and when, a few days later, Mr. Churchill suggested to the War Office the advisability of collecting enough transport for 40,000 men—such transport to be assembled in Egypt—Lord Kitchener again replied that he did not think this was yet necessary, and that he would give the Admiralty full notice. The precaution was taken, however, in spite of this, to send horse-boats to Egypt whenever convenient, in view of the possible

occasion of some such expedition as had already now become adumbrated.

Meanwhile the navy was playing its part in various operations already necessitated by the war with Turkey. Thus, on November 2nd, the *Minerva*, a sixteen-year-old protected cruiser, had shelled the forts and barracks of Akaba in the Red Sea; and, on November 8th, the town of Fao, at the head of the Persian Gulf, had been bombarded to cover the landing of troops from India, whence they captured Basra on November 21st. Simultaneously, of course, between Russia and Turkey, the struggle for the mastery of the Black Sea had been progressing. On November 10th, the Russians had sunk four Turkish transports; and, on November 18th, the *Goeben* had been materially damaged in an engagement off Sebastopol. Two days later, the Turkish *Hamidieh* had bombarded Tuapse. On December 10th, the *Goeben*, having been repaired, with the *Berk-i-Satvet*, shelled Batum; and, on December 12th, the *Hamidieh* was damaged by a mine in the Bosphorus. The first notable Turkish loss, however, was in the torpedoing of the battleship *Messudiyeh* in the Dardanelles, on December 13th, by the British submarine *B11*, under circumstances that will be referred to later. On December 17th, the Russian cruiser *Askold* sank a couple of Turkish steamers off Beyrout, and, on December 26th, the *Goeben* was again damaged, this time, like the *Hamidieh*, by a mine in the Bosphorus. Later, having been once more repaired, she was again to figure in desultory raiding actions on Black Sea ports; but, by the end of the year, it may be said that



the Russian Navy was practically in unchallenged command of the Black Sea.

Russia's position in the land campaign against Turkey was not, however, quite so satisfactory, and it was on January 2nd that there was received in London a telegram from Sir George Buchanan, our ambassador in Petrograd, destined to have a profound effect upon our Near East policy. In this it was stated that the Russian armies were being rather severely pressed in the Caucasus, and that the Russian Government hoped it might be found possible for a demonstration to be made against Turkey elsewhere. On this same day, Lord Kitchener wrote to Mr. Churchill that he did not think we could do anything that would seriously help the Russians in the Caucasus; that we had no troops to land anywhere; that the only place where a demonstration might check the sending eastward of Turkey's reinforcements was the Dardanelles; but that we should not be ready for anything big for some months. A telegram was, however, sent to Russia the next day that some demonstration would be made, although it was unlikely, it was feared, that it would have any great effect in withdrawing enemy troops from the Caucasus. To an ally in a strait that was the only reply possible. But to the British Government it meant this—that by January 3d it had definitely pledged itself to make a demonstration against the Turks, and that the Dardanelles had again been mentioned as a possible arena of attack.

Let us consider for a moment, from the geographical standpoint, the sort of problem that was pre-



sented. A little under fifty miles in length, the channel of the Dardanelles—the Hellespont of the ancients—united the Sea of Marmora on the east with the Ægean Sea and Mediterranean on the west. Its general course was from northeast to southwest, but, at the point known as the Narrows, about fourteen miles from the Ægean entrance, there was a kink in it, lying north and south, a little over four miles long. In no part of its course between the Ægean Sea and the town of Gallipoli, where it began to broaden, was it more than 7,000 yards wide, and at the Narrows it was little more than three-quarters of a mile across. Its depth in mid-channel varied from 25 to 55 fathoms, and down it set a current from the Sea of Marmora of an average speed of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  knots, frequently increasing, and especially in the Narrows, after a northerly wind, to as much as 5 knots. In addition to this, cross-currents were continually met with, owing to the shallow bays on each side of the channel.

The boundaries of this channel were, on the north side, the Peninsula of Gallipoli which separated it from the Gulf of Saros, and, on the southern, the coast of Asia Minor, upon the westernmost portion of which had stood the old town of Troy. The Peninsula of Gallipoli was a narrow tongue of land, not more than three miles wide where it sprouted from the mainland, swelling to twelve just above the Narrows, but only five miles across at the Narrows themselves. It was almost wholly arid or brush-covered, with a central and irregular spine of hills, rising, in the plateau of Kilid Bahr and the heights

of Krithia and Achi Baba, to 970,700, and 600 feet respectively, and, except for a few small beaches and descending stream-beds, facing both north and south in low, precipitous cliffs.

The southern or Asiatic shores of the Dardanelles were somewhat lower and more broken, the hills inland rising to 3,000 feet, many of them being plentifully wooded. Of these the most famous was Kag Dagħ, the Mount Ida of the Gods, whence, in the Homeric poems, they had looked down upon the twenty years' siege of Troy. Every yard of these shores, indeed, as of the waters between them, was instinct with real or legendary history. Across the Dardanelles, Leander had swum to Hero. Over the Narrows, Xerxes had built his bridge of boats. By the same road, a hundred and fifty years later, Alexander of Macedon had marched to the conquest of Asia; and it had been across the Narrows, in the middle of the fourteenth century, that the Turks from Asia had swarmed into Europe. Constantinople and all but a few miles around it had soon been encircled by their advance, and had been finally occupied by Sultan Mohamed II about a hundred years afterward.

That had been in 1453, and, nine years later, recognizing the vital importance of the Dardanelles, Mohamed II had built the first two forts of the many that were afterward designed to protect them. These were the Old Castles, the Castles of Europe and Asia, on either side of the Narrows; and it had not been till two hundred years later that the two New Castles had been built lower down, at the Ægean

entrance. From that time onward, till 1864, the fortifications of the Dardanelles may be said to have remained mediæval; but, upon the advice of Great Britain, then Turkey's protector, new works had been undertaken, and, after the Peace of San Stefano in 1878, there had been a further strengthening of both coasts, the later fortifications having been German and the artillery provided by Krupps.

Since that date, the Dardanelles had never been forced against armed resistance, and only once before, in modern times, when the British admiral Duckworth in 1807 had made a plucky but not very long-lived demonstration before Constantinople—having had to retire, not without damage, owing to the precarious nature of his communications.

Such was the geographical aspect of the problem that the Admiralty was called upon to consider; and the fortifications protecting the Straits were arranged somewhat as follows. Commanding the entrance, on the European side, were forts at Cape Helles and Sedd-el-Bahr with two others on the Asiatic side, Fort Orkanieh and Kum Kale. These contained, between them, ten 10.2-inch guns, four 9.2-inch, and two 6-inch guns. A few miles higher up, about four below the Narrows, and just south of Point Kephez on the Asiatic coast, was Fort Dardanos, mounting five 6-inch guns in rectangular turrets, at a height of about 350 feet. Opposite this, on the European side, was Fort Soghandere. The mouth of the Narrows themselves was very strongly guarded both at Chanak in Asia and Kilid Bahr on the Peninsula; and a fleet approaching the Narrows

would find itself confronted—apart from an unknown number of field-guns and howitzers—with ten 14-inch, eighteen 10.2-inch, eight 9.2-inch, and thirty-seven 6-inch guns, as well as twenty-one 8.3-inch howitzers. When it is remembered that, in addition, there were the channel minefields and land torpedo-stations to be reckoned with, and an area of manœuvre less than four miles at the widest, it will be seen that the prospect, on paper at any rate, was a sufficiently formidable one from every standpoint. Could it reasonably be faced by the navy alone? Was an accompanying army absolutely essential? And, if so, of what numbers must the latter consist to ensure success?

These were the questions that now inevitably arose; and if, from a technical standpoint, the first could be answered satisfactorily, there would be many obvious advantages in the purely naval attack. If the navy, that was to say, could force itself unaided into the Sea of Marmora and shell Constantinople, troops that would be very valuable elsewhere need not be diverted to a new theatre of war; a great deal of tonnage would be saved at a time when the pressure on our mercantile marine was everywhere immense, while, if it were unsuccessful, such an attack could be abandoned, it was thought, without much damage to our prestige.

It was quite clear, of course, that, unless the Straits could be secured behind it, the Fleet would not remain there for very long. But, from evidence at the Government's disposal, it was believed that its arrival would have immediate and far-reaching results—that a revolution in Constantinople against

the pro-German Young Turk Party would almost certainly ensue; and that Bulgaria, then neutral and undecided, might definitely ally herself with the Entente Powers. Further, the opening of the Dardanelles would at once facilitate the admission into Russia of much-needed munitions, and would release, for the benefit of the world at large, considerable supplies of cereals.

Moreover, there was another factor that forbade the question being summarily dismissed as technically impossible. For, while it was true that hitherto the bulk of naval opinion had been adverse to the use of ships in a duel with forts, and while the results of purely naval action against such defenses as those, for example, as Port Arthur, had not been encouraging, it was realized that in the present war—as regarded the land, at any rate—the value of fortresses had fallen very considerably. Hammered by modern artillery, the world had seen such strongholds as those of Liège, Namur, and Antwerp, crumbling to pieces in a few hours, and theories were once more in the melting-pot. Since the outbreak of war, too, there had been added to the navy, in the 15-inch guns of the *Queen Elizabeth*, the most powerful marine artillery that the world had yet seen. Could the navy then tackle the problem alone?

With all this in his mind, on January 3d, the day that we had pledged ourselves to do our best, Mr. Churchill telegraphed to Vice-Admiral Carden, then our senior officer in the Mediterranean, asking him if he thought it practicable to force the Dardanelles by the use of ships alone, assuming that only our



older battleships would be employed, with a suitable escort of mine-sweepers and bumpers, and suggesting that the importance of a successful result would justify severe loss. Two days later, Vice-Admiral Carden replied that he did not think the Dardanelles could be rushed, but that they might be forced by extended operations with a large number of ships. On January 6th, Mr. Churchill invited Admiral Carden to forward detailed particulars as to the force required, the manner of its employment, and the results to be expected from it. Five days afterward, Admiral Carden replied that five operations were possible, namely, the destruction of the defenses at the entrance to the Dardanelles; action inside the Straits so as to clear the defenses up to and including Point Kephez Battery; the destruction of the defenses of the Narrows; the sweeping of a clear channel through the minefields and advance through the Narrows, followed by a reduction of the forts farther up, and an entrance into the Sea of Marmora. What Admiral Carden suggested, in fact, was a methodical invasion with a systematic demolition of the fortifications—an operation estimated to require at least a month for its performance.

This was Admiral Carden's plan, and it was of course discussed by the Admiralty War Group, though never officially by the Board of Admiralty; and it is interesting to discover the general attitude of its naval members toward the scheme. Of these by far the most influential was Lord Fisher, who seems from the first instinctively to have distrusted it, to have been occupied with preparing for other



operations elsewhere, and to have left it, so long as it seemed to him likely to remain subsidiary and additional to these, in the admittedly capable hands of Admiral Sir Henry Jackson—not a regular member of the War Group, but frequently consulted—and the then Chief of the Staff, Admiral Henry Oliver. Sir Arthur Wilson seems on the whole to have taken up much the same attitude as that of Lord Fisher. Admiral Oliver believed in its possibilities, though these would largely depend, of course, upon factors, whose importance could only be determined by experiment. At the same time, he would apparently have preferred to wait until the army could co-operate on a big scale. Commodore Bartolomé, while agreeing in the preferability of a combined naval and military operation, believed that, at a push, in a purely naval attack, about half the forces could get through, though what they would do then was a matter upon which he felt himself in the dark. None of these sailors believed, since it could always be broken off, that the proposed naval attack could lead to disaster. All assumed the necessity, as seen by the War Council, from a political point of view, of immediate action; and all assumed it to be the case, on the authority of Lord Kitchener, that no troops were at the moment available.

Thus we come to the 13th of January, the very critical date when, at a meeting of the War Council, Mr. Churchill, with additional details, submitted Admiral Carden's plans. The outer forts having been destroyed, as could be done, it was believed, without the bombarding ships coming into range of their guns,

the inner would be attacked both from the Straits and by indirect fire across the Gallipoli Peninsula. Three modern vessels and about a dozen old battle-ships would, it was thought, suffice for the operation; and these could be spared without sensibly depleting our naval strength elsewhere. Further, the *Queen Elizabeth*, now ready for her trials and about to carry these out at Gibraltar, could instead fledge her virgin guns upon the forts of the Dardanelles.

Such was the proposition laid before the War Council, and it was quite clear, of course, to every member of it that, with a minimum of effort, it opened a vista of very dazzling political possibilities. It was also obvious that Mr. Churchill himself believed whole-heartedly that the attempt should be made. What was the attitude of his colleagues on this most important occasion? Now, while in the end it was Mr. Asquith who would have to be responsible for any decision, it was undoubtedly Lord Kitchener, in such a matter as this, whose opinion would carry the greatest weight; but Lord Fisher and Sir Arthur Wilson were also present, though not as executive members. Lord Kitchener, after consideration, pronounced himself in favour of the plan, pointing out that, if it were to prove unsuccessful, the attack could be discontinued. Lord Fisher and Sir Arthur Wilson remained silent, and their silence was accepted as giving technical consent. Nor would it have been true to have interpreted it otherwise, although the minds of both of them were occupied with other plans. It was therefore decided to instruct the Admiralty to prepare for a naval

expedition in February to bombard and take the Gallipoli Peninsula with Constantinople as its objective—a decision that was unhappily variously understood by the different members of the Council, the majority being under the impression that all they had done was to sanction the tentative preliminaries of a promising line of action.

Mr. Churchill, however, thought otherwise, and, with his characteristic energy and enterprise, now threw himself vigorously into a scheme that more and more fully absorbed his imagination. He put himself into touch with the French Minister of Marine, who visited London and approved of the plans, and, with the consent of his Government, promised the coöperation of French naval forces in the Mediterranean. The precise sphere in which each navy was to act was determined with great care, and it was understood that Admiral Carden was to be in command of both forces.

Meanwhile, however, from a condition of not very enthusiastic consent, Lord Fisher was slowly adopting an attitude of more or less active disapproval. Already he foresaw that the proposed adventure would almost inevitably assume dimensions that would seriously endanger the larger scheme, upon which he and Admiral Wilson were hard at work. He accordingly wrote direct to Mr. Asquith on January 28th, submitting a memorandum that did not actually condemn the suggested bombardment on its own merits, but made it clear to the Premier that Lord Fisher was not in such accord with it as he had assumed.

Hearing of this letter, Mr. Churchill also wrote to Mr. Asquith, and, as a result of this, on January 28th, before the next meeting of the War Council, Mr. Asquith invited both of them to his private room for half an hour. The drama of Gallipoli, with its throne-shaking prize time after time on the brink of capture, with its pitiless slaughters, its amazing achievements, its epic presentment of human courage—the drama of Gallipoli was still in the future; but, in that half-hour, the stage was committed to it; and there can have been few discussions, during the course of the war, more pregnant with the issues of life and death.

It would be tempting to linger for a moment over the historic picture of the three men in that little room—the old Admiral, pivot of so many controversies, but admittedly the greatest living seaman; the young statesman, who had already in his crowded life played so many parts, soldier, journalist, Cabinet Minister, and who had now been a brilliant First Lord for more than three years; and the silver-haired, ruddy-cheeked Yorkshireman, to whom this was but one of a thousand issues, for which, as for his country's entrance into the war, he must take the ultimate responsibility. In that half-hour, his was chiefly to listen while the two unfolded their separate schemes. Upon the attitude of his mind toward them at the subsequent War Council, its final decision would mainly depend. He entered it, inclining of the two toward Mr. Churchill's, on the ground of its general political advantages; and indeed the preparations for carrying out the latter were already far advanced.

This became clear when, at the Council Table, Mr. Churchill explained what had been done. The Grand Duke Nicholas, then Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armies, had welcomed the idea with enthusiasm; the French Admiralty had promised co-operation; the admiral on the spot believed that it would succeed; the attack could be stopped if unsuccessful; and the necessary ships were already on the way. Further, the French were confident that the Austrian submarines could not get as far as the Dardanelles, while the Turks, as far as was known, had no submarines at all. Little loss was expected during the bombardment of the entrance, though some might result during the sweeping up of mines; the real difficulty would be the attack on the Narrows, of which Mr. Churchill submitted the plan.

Lord Fisher then said that he had understood that the question would not be raised to-day; but Mr. Asquith held that, in view of the steps that had been taken, it could not be left any longer in abeyance. Lord Kitchener considered the attack on the Dardanelles to be one of the utmost importance, and equivalent, if successful, to a victorious campaign fought by the new armies then training; and both Mr. Balfour and Sir Edward Grey dwelt on its political effect upon the Balkans. There then followed a dramatic incident. Lord Fisher, pushing his chair back, rose from the table as though about to leave the room. Lord Kitchener at once followed him, and asked him what he meant to do. He said that he would not return to the Council Table and meant to resign his position as First Sea Lord. For a few



minutes the two men, each outstandingly first in his own profession, stood talking by the window, Lord Kitchener urging Lord Fisher to come back to the table. He was the only dissentient, as Lord Kitchener pointed out, everybody else being in favour of the plan; and, after a little fresh argument, Lord Fisher returned and resumed his place among the others.

Mr. Churchill had, however, noticed the incident and, after lunch, had a private talk with Lord Fisher, strongly urging him to undertake the operation, and obtaining his definite, if reluctant, consent to do so. At the afternoon meeting of the War Council, Mr. Churchill then announced that the Admiralty was willing to proceed, and, from that time onward, he never looked back. The matter, in his own words, had passed into the domain of action. By January 28th, therefore, the country was finally committed to a purely naval attack on the Dardanelles with Constantinople as its ultimate objective.

This was the decision, but almost immediately—almost insensibly in fact—the scope of the operations began to widen. From the outset it had been clear that the silencing of the forts would demand a certain number of landing-parties, although it was believed that these need only be small, consisting principally of Marines. Lord Kitchener himself was then of the opinion that, once the ships had completed their passage, the garrison of the Peninsula would evacuate it, and it would cease to have any military importance. He was also quite definite in his statement that there were no more British troops available for



the purpose, an opinion which Mr. Churchill did not share, though he was, of course, overborne by Lord Kitchener's authority. Nevertheless the idea of military coöperation grew, as it were, unofficially in the minds of those responsible. Sir Henry Jackson, in a memorandum to be adopted or not, according to Admiral Carden's discretion—pointed out that the naval bombardment was not recommended as a sound operation, unless a strong military force was ready to assist, or at least to follow it up.

Meanwhile the Turkish attack upon Egypt had been defeated; certain of our plans in France and Flanders had been altered; and, on February 16th, at an informal meeting of Ministers, a very important decision was arrived at. This was to send the 29th Division, hitherto destined for service on the Western Front, to Lemnos, an island about sixty miles from the Gallipoli Peninsula—the Division sailing, it was hoped, within ten days. At the same time arrangements were to be made for a further force to be sent if necessary from Egypt; horse-boats were to accompany the 29th Division; arrangements were to be made to assemble a large number of lighters and tugs in the Levant; and the Admiralty was also to build special transports and lighters, suitable for the conveying and landing of 50,000 men where these might be wanted. The military effort was already in embryo, therefore, before the purely naval attack had been begun; and, with all this in mind, we can now transfer our attention to the actual scene of conflict.

It was on February 19, 1915, that Admiral Carden decided to open the bombardment of the entrance

forts, namely those of Cape Helles and Sedd-el-Bahr on the northern and European side, and Kum Kale and Orkanieh on the southern or Asiatic. Admiral Carden himself, then fifty-eight, had had a varied and adventurous career; had taken part in the Egyptian campaign of 1882; receiving the medal and the Khedive's Bronze Star; had been present, two years later, at the Eastern Sudan campaign; and, as a commander in 1897, had been with the punitive expedition that followed the Benin massacres. He had reached flag-rank in 1908, and had been Rear-Admiral to the Atlantic Fleet for a year, being the Admiral Superintendent of Malta Dockyard at the outbreak of war.

Under his command, besides a flotilla of destroyers and the seaplane ship *Ark Royal*, were three old English battleships—the *Vengeance*, that had already been employed on the Belgian coast; the *Cornwallis*, that had been at the Nore, in the Third Fleet, christened the “Forlorn Hope”; and the *Triumph*, formerly the Chilian *Libertad*, that had been acting as Depot Ship at Hong Kong. With these were the *Agememnon*, a more modern battleship, though about to have been passed into the Second Fleet; and the *Inflexible*, which we have last heard of helping to sink the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* near the Antarctic Circle. In addition there were under his command the *Suffren*, *Gaulois*, and *Bouvet*, three old French battleships that, the summer before, had not even been in commission. All these vessels, however, with the exception of the *Triumph*, carried 12-inch guns and therefore outranged the forts; and, between

them, they mounted a secondary armament of fourteen 7.5-inch, ten 9.2-inch, ten 6.4-inch, twenty-four 6-inch, eighteen 5.5-inch, and sixteen 4-inch guns.

Beginning at eight in the morning, a long-distance shelling was continued till a quarter to three in the afternoon, when the *Vengeance*, *Cornwallis*, and *Triumph*, with the three French battleships—less valuable vessels that could justifiably be risked—drew in to shore and opened fire with their secondary armament of smaller guns. It then became clear that, in spite of the previous five hours' bombardment, the forts had not been silenced, for they immediately opened fire. They effected no damage, however. By nightfall, those on the European side had apparently been put out of action, but one of the Asiatic forts was still replying when the light failed and operations ceased.

Bad weather followed, and it was not till February 25th that the attack could be seriously taken up again, the Fleet having been strengthened in the interval, notably by the *Queen Elizabeth* with her 15-inch guns. Together with the *Irresistible*, the *Agamemnon*, and the French battleship *Gaulois*, she began a long-range bombardment early in the morning, and this was followed as before by an attack at close quarters—the *Vengeance*, *Cornwallis*, and *Suffren* again taking their part in this, with the *Charlemagne* and, later in the day, the *Triumph* and *Albion*. Even so it was not until evening that the last gun was silenced, and the trawlers, under cover of the fleet, were able to begin clearing away the mines.

Nor could the results of these two days' bombard-

ments have been said to hold great promise for the future. So little damage had been done by the first day's firing that the batteries were all active again by the second; and, at the end of this, when the demolition-parties landed, they found seventy per cent. of the guns still in serviceable condition. Few more dangerous duties, under such circumstances, can be imagined than those undertaken by these little detachments; and, both in the courage with which they were faced and the coolness with which they were completed, the records of the navy and the Royal Marines were more than fully sustained. Particularly prominent was the act of Lieutenant-Commander E. G. Robinson, who on February 26th went alone, under heavy fire, into a hostile gun-position, that might well have been occupied, destroyed a 4-inch gun single-handed, and then returned to his landing-party for a further charge to destroy a second gun that he had found there. Owing to the fact that their white uniforms rendered them so conspicuous as targets, Lieutenant-Commander Robinson refused to allow his comrades to accompany him on either occasion. For this act he was very justly awarded the Victoria Cross.

Meanwhile at home, the lack of unanimity, of whole-hearted enthusiasm in the necessary teamwork, and, more than this, of a detailed conception of what was actually intended were beginning to bear their fruits. Thus it had been decided, in the first place—and this had greatly influenced both Lord Fisher and Sir Arthur Wilson—that, if the naval attack were to become unpromising, it would be

broken off and its losses cut. That had also been Lord Kitchener's view, but, on February 24th, he stated, at a meeting of the War Council, that if the Fleet could not get through without help, the army would have to come to its aid. By Mr. Churchill that had evidently long been accepted, and preparations, as we have seen, were well under way. Transports had been collected for the despatch of the 29th Division, and it was hoped that it would begin to sail on the 22nd. Two days before, however, Lord Kitchener had decided, for reasons doubtless important, but without consulting his colleagues, that this Division could not be spared, and he had countermanded the transports.

Against this reversal of policy at a critical moment, Mr. Churchill made the strongest protest, and said that he must disclaim all responsibility if disaster occurred in Turkey owing to the insufficiency of troops. Lord Kitchener for his part asserted that the forces in Egypt, on the spot, and on the way there, were at present quite adequate, and that the 29th Division was not then essential to success—a view that the War Council supported, the 29th Division being detained in England.

While now determined that the affair should not be broken off, Lord Kitchener still believed that the navy would need but little military help, and, on February 24th, he wired to Sir John Maxwell, then commanding the forces in Egypt, and General Birdwood, who was to command the Australian and New Zealand contingent on the Peninsula, that it was not intended to land parties on Gallipoli, except



under cover of the naval guns, to help in the total demolition of the forts, when the ships should get to close quarters.

Two days later, Sir John Maxwell replied that, in the opinion of a French officer, formerly military attaché at Constantinople, a military expedition was essential to the opening of the passage for the Allied Fleets; that a landing would be extremely hazardous; and that the Peninsula was very strongly organized for defence. Nevertheless Lord Kitchener retained his opinion and telegraphed the same evening to General Birdwood, that as far as could be seen, till the passage was actually secured, he would be limited to such minor operations as the final destruction of the batteries, though it was possible that he might have to organize expeditions to deal with inland concealed howitzers such as the ships could not destroy.

General Birdwood had not then sailed for the Dardanelles, and, at a meeting of the War Council on March 3d, Lord Kitchener announced that it might after all be possible to send the 29th Division, but that he proposed to leave the matter open till March 10th, when he hoped to have heard from General Birdwood. By this time, the entrance had been cleared, and for several days the ships had been operating in the Straits themselves, bombarding Forts Dardanos and Sogandhere, protecting the mine-sweepers, and landing Marines—the latter suffering a reverse at Kum Kale with about fifty casualties.

This was on March 4th, and the next day General



Birdwood, who had arrived earlier than was expected, telegraphed to Lord Kitchener that he was very doubtful whether the navy could force the passage unaided; that the previous attacks had been comparatively easy, since the ships could stand off and shoot from anywhere; but that in the Straits they were being bothered by unknown fire. Twenty-four hours afterward, he sent another telegram maintaining the same point of view. On March 6th, a preliminary bombardment of the forts of the Narrows took place, the *Queen Elizabeth* and *Agamemnon* firing over the Peninsula from the Gulf of Saros, themselves being hit but not seriously damaged by concealed Turkish batteries on the Peninsula, yet without obtaining, as was afterward discovered, any appreciable results. The attack was renewed the next day, and it was believed that Fort Chanak had been silenced, several of our vessels having been hit but none of them placed out of action. In these operations, the *Ocean*, *Majestic*, *Albion*, *Prince George*, *Lord Nelson*, and *Vengeance* also participated, together with the French *Suffren*, *Bouvet*, *Charlemagne*, and *Gaulois*. So we come to March 10th, on which date Lord Kitchener finally released the 29th Division, the transports sailing on March 16th, three weeks later than had been intended, and three days after Sir Ian Hamilton, who had been given command of the Expeditionary Army, left England.

The time was now approaching when, if it were to be made at all, the navy must attempt its decisive thrust; and telegrams concerning this were already being exchanged between Mr. Churchill and Admiral

Carden. On March 11th, Mr. Churchill wired to the effect that, while Admiral Carden's skill and patience in avoiding casualties had been highly appreciated at the Admiralty, the results to be gained by success were deemed to be sufficiently important to justify a necessary loss in men and ships. The whole operation might be decided, and consequences of a decisive character be produced by the turning of the corner at Chanak. It was recognized that the Admiral would have to press hard, at a certain point of the action, to obtain such a decision; and it was desired to know whether, in his opinion, the suitable occasion had now arrived.

To this Admiral Carden replied two days later that he considered this stage to have been reached, and that, in order to ensure his communications immediately he entered the Sea of Marmora, military operations on a large scale should at once be commenced. On March 15th, Mr. Churchill replied that Sir Ian Hamilton would arrive on the 16th, and that Admiral Carden should consult with him as to the concerted steps to be taken. On March 16th, however, Admiral Carden, for reasons of health, had to resign his command, and, on the next day, Vice-Admiral Sir John Michael de Robeck was appointed by telegram to succeed him.

In this telegram, Mr. Churchill presumed that, in Admiral de Robeck's judgment, the proposed operations were practicable, but asked him not to hesitate to say so if he held a contrary opinion. Replying the same day, Admiral de Robeck made it clear that the suggested plan of campaign received his full con-

currence; that the success of the undertaking would depend on his ability to clear the minefields before forcing the Narrows; and that to do this successfully the forts must be silenced while the mine-sweeping was in progress. He further stated that he had had an entirely satisfactory interview with Sir Ian Hamilton, General d'Amade, and Admiral Wemyss—afterward to become First Sea Lord.

On March 18th, therefore, under excellent weather conditions, the decisive attempt was begun, with an advance fringe of destroyers and trawlers to clear a channel for the bombarding squadrons. Work upon the minefields, indeed, had already been in progress since February 25th, in which these trawler mine-sweepers, under Commander W. Mellor, had persisted with unfailing gallantry. With the current always, and the wind frequently, opposed to them; with every minefield accurately ranged, and hotly contested by the enemy's guns, they had suffered the severest casualties both in men and material without for a moment desisting from their task. And, manned, as they were, largely by reservists and men hitherto unaccustomed to war, they had exhibited qualities of heroism and seamanship not even excelled by the destroyer patrols.

That is saying a good deal, since these latter, throughout the winter and under the worst circumstances, had maintained a standard of cheerful efficiency as high as any that the navy had ever reached. Long before the naval expedition had been decided upon, and throughout the critical discussions in London, they had sentinelled the Ægean, the

Syrian coast, and the mouth of the Dardanelles. With their decks never dry, with their galley-fires out, with all on board drenched to the skin, they had ridden out storm after storm in these notoriously treacherous seas. Servants of everybody, succourers of the wounded, and general suppliers of the landing-parties, none—not even the submarines presently to be considered—were to play a nobler part in the Gallipoli story.

It was at about a quarter to eleven in the morning that the great bombardment began, the *Queen Elizabeth*, *Inflexible*, *Agamemnon*, and *Lord Nelson*, stationed near the entrance, opening fire at about ten and a half miles range. These four battleships took for their targets the forts at Kilid Bahr and Chanak; while the *Triumph* and *Prince George*, at closer range, engaged the forts at Soghandere, Kephez, and Dardanos. This action was continued for an hour and a half, when a French squadron, magnificently handled, advanced up the Straits as far as Point Kephez, and, at close range, engaged the forts of the Narrows.

All the ships were hit, but, manœuvring in circles, none was materially injured, the *Suffren*, *Gaulois*, *Charlemagne*, and *Bouvet* being the vessels employed. After an hour and a half of this inshore firing, the forts ceased to reply; and, at about the same time, the French vessels were relieved—the *Vengeance*, *Irresistible*, *Albion*, *Majestic*, *Swiftsure*, and *Ocean* taking their places. These vessels began their attack at half-past two, advancing in line and meeting a hot fire; and it was just as the French vessels were passing out that the first disaster of the day occurred in the

sinking of the *Bouvet* by a floating mine. This was in an area previously swept clear, and it opened up a new and difficult problem, namely that of mines, loosed higher up the Straits, and drifting down with the current. Sinking in three minutes, practically the whole of the crew of the *Bouvet* was lost.

It was now becoming clear that the old axiom as to the inferiority of ships to forts still held the field; and to the observers on land it was even more obvious than to those who were directing the gunfire afloat. In the rear of one battery, for instance, within a space not more than three hundred feet deep, there fell no less than eighty-six shells, the battery itself remaining undamaged, while none of the 6-inch guns of the much-hammered Fort Dardanos suffered any injury from our fire. The assault was continued, however, till dark, with the utmost vigour, in spite of the growing list of casualties, both the *Irresistible* and *Ocean* being sunk by drifting mines, and the *Gaulois* and *Inflexible* seriously crippled by gunfire.

Struck soon after four, it was not until ten minutes to six that the *Irresistible* went down in deep water, most of her crew being saved, thanks, in a great measure, to the seamanship of Captain C. P. Metcalfe of the destroyer *Wear*, and Midshipman Hugh Dixon of one of *Queen Elizabeth's* picket-boats, who laid themselves alongside under a very heavy fire. A quarter of an hour after the *Irresistible* sank, the *Ocean* was struck, but most of her crew were also rescued. The damage to the *Inflexible* was sufficiently serious to make it very uncertain that she would reach port; her forward control position being



badly smashed up, her shell room and magazine injured by a mine; and many of her compartments rendered untenable by poisonous fumes. That she happily did so was chiefly due to the valour and discipline of all on board, and perhaps particularly to the steadfastness of her engineer officers and engine-room staff. Working in semi-darkness, in stifling heat, and in momentary peril of death by drowning, the strain imposed upon them, and from which they emerged so well, was of the severest order.

So ended the great attempt of the unaided navy, never, as it turned out, to be repeated, although the first intention of all responsible, both at home and on the spot, was to renew it. Thus, Admiral de Robeck, wiring an account of it, stated that the squadron was ready again for immediate action, although it would be necessary to reconsider the plan of attack and to find a solution of the drifting-mine problem. Both Lord Fisher and Sir Arthur Wilson, on the morning of the 19th, as well as Mr. Churchill himself, shared this view; and Lord Fisher at once ordered two more battleships to reinforce Admiral de Robeck, the *Queen* and the *Implacable* being already on their way. With equal promptitude, the French Government had ordered the *Henri IV* to replace the *Bouvet*. This was also the attitude of the War Council, who, on February 19th, wired to Admiral de Robeck, instructing him formally, if he thought fit, to continue the operations against the Dardanelles.

On the other hand, Sir Ian Hamilton, telegraphing to Lord Kitchener, had expressed his opinion that,



from what he had seen, the Dardanelles were less likely to be forced by battleships alone than at one time had seemed probable, and that the military operations to ensure success would not be of the secondary nature hitherto suggested. To this Lord Kitchener replied that the Dardanelles must be forced, and that, if large military operations were necessary, they must be undertaken. Meanwhile Admiral de Robeck was beginning to agree with Sir Ian Hamilton, and on March 23d wired to the Admiralty that the mine menace was greater than had been suspected; that time would be required to deal with it satisfactorily, but that the Fleet would be ready as soon as the army; and that a decisive operation about the middle of April seemed to offer better prospects than immediate action.

These views were the result of a conference, earlier in the day, between Admiral de Robeck, Sir Ian Hamilton, and General Birdwood, but both to Mr. Churchill and Lord Kitchener—and not without reason—this postponement seemed far too long. The latter at once telegraphed to Sir Ian Hamilton, pointing this out to him, and asking him how soon he could act on shore—a difficult question to answer in view of the facts that, only ten days before, Sir Ian had been in England; that he had been assisted by no previous staff preparation; that he had been given no preliminary scheme of action; that no arrangements had been made about water-supply; that the 29th Division had not yet even sailed; and that, when he had left, it had been under the assumption that the navy itself would force the Straits.

On March 26th, however, this last idea was finally abandoned as the result of a further telegram from Admiral de Robeck, in which he stated definitely that, in his opinion, and after consultation with General Hamilton, a combined operation was essential to secure the objects of the campaign. To Mr. Churchill, who still believed that the navy, with local military help, might win its way through, this decision was a great disappointment; and he was unwilling to accept it. He was anxious to order Admiral de Robeck to renew the naval attack according to his previous intention. But neither Lord Fisher, Sir Arthur Wilson, nor Sir Henry Jackson agreed to this. While the men on the spot were willing, they had been ready to back them up. Now that these had changed their minds, they refused to press them. Before such a weight of opinion Mr. Churchill could but bow, although Mr. Asquith and Mr. Balfour were inclined to agree with him.

Nor were there lacking experts, who held the same view, both at the Admiralty and the Dardanelles. On the military side also, General Birdwood was for an immediate action with the then available forces; and, in view of later knowledge, this, with a further naval effort, might very possibly have achieved the desired end. For it was not until April 25th that Sir Ian Hamilton was ready to land his whole military force; and, in that month, the Peninsula of Gallipoli was transformed into a well-nigh impregnable arsenal.

With the purely military side of the following campaign this is not the place fully to deal; but some-

thing of the ordeal that was now in preparation not only for the soldiers but for the sailors can be gathered from the memoranda, since become public, of German officers who were concerned in it, and who were fully aware, of course, of the military concentration on the islands of Lemnos, Tenedos, and Imbros. Thus, a week after the naval attack had failed, General Liman von Sanders took command of the Peninsula; began to build roads in post haste, bodies of Greek and Armenian workmen being brought up for the purpose; constructed barbed-wire defences at every possible landing-place, some of these being submerged in the shallow waters; built machine-gun emplacements amongst the surrounding cliffs, and imported heavy guns of all calibres—according to Enver Pasha, 200 Skoda guns were, in these four weeks, rushed down to the Peninsula.

Meanwhile, owing to the defective loading of the British transports, these all had to be sent back again to Alexandria, the nearest place where there were facilities for a rapid re-arrangement of the troops and material. While this was in process, the general plan of attack was being considered by the naval and military staffs, but could not be worked out in detail till April 10th, when the Army Headquarters returned from Egypt—Commodore Keyes, already familiar to us, acting as Chief of Staff to Admiral de Robeck.

Collected in the harbour of Mudros, there was now a veritable Armada of every kind of naval and mercantile craft—from Atlantic liners to Hull trawlers and from obsolete battleships to the latest marine

inventions. Between these and the shore plied smaller motor-boats and pinnaces on innumerable errands, and, by the end of the third week in April, all had been organized for the proposed landing. In view of the long delay, the magnitude of the operations, and the neighbourhood of the assembling-places to their objectives, it had been wholly impossible, of course, to conceal from the enemy the nature and scope of the impending attack. Nothing but sheer artillery fire, rapidity of execution, and human heroism could be depended upon; and, at only one of the landings—that at Gaba Tepe on the north of the Peninsula—was a surprise to be hoped for.

Simultaneously with this landing, it was proposed to throw forces ashore at five other beaches scattered round the head of the Peninsula. Of these, following the coast westward from Gaba Tepe—about a dozen miles from the tip of the Peninsula—the next was Y beach, some ten miles away. South of this was X beach, three miles farther along and just north of Cape Tekeh; next came W beach round the corner, between Cape Tekeh and Cape Helles; then V beach, facing south, between Cape Helles and Seddel-Bahr; and finally S beach, round the corner again, in Morto Bay, just inside the entrance.

It had also been arranged, as a 'diversion, that there should be a landing of French forces at Kum Kale on the Asiatic shore. Each expedition was self-contained, the navy taking charge of the landing and supplying the beach-masters to superintend the arrangements; the covering forces were conveyed in

battleships, from which they were to be landed in boats towed by naval pinnaces, the main body of the troops being afterward brought up, when the landing-places had been secured, in allotted liners. In view of all the circumstances, it was an attempt without precedent, and as perilous an operation as could well be conceived. Nevertheless it was entered upon with the highest anticipations by every rank concerned. Let us consider the landings in the foregoing order, beginning with that at Gaba Tepe in what was afterward to be known as Anzac Cove.

In charge of this was Rear-Admiral C. F. Thursby, who had under his command the following five battleships, the *Queen*, *London*, and *Prince of Wales*, each carrying some 500 troops; and the *Triumph* and *Majestic*, which were to cover the landing with gunfire. With them were the cruisers *Bacchante* and eight destroyers, some of the latter also carrying troops, the seaplane ship *Ark Royal*, a balloon ship, and fifteen trawlers. All through the morning of the 24th, the transports had been getting into position, and the exodus from the harbour began in the afternoon, the skies being clear and the sea calm. Presently the various squadrons passed ahead of the transports, and these, with their attendant troopships, separated for their appointed stations—the cheers from the shore dying behind them as they moved out to the open sea.

Each had its rendezvous off the Peninsula coast, that of Admiral Thursby's squadron being about five miles distant from it; and this was reached in the first hour of Sunday morning under a bright but



setting half-moon. Since the fall of dusk the night before, the squadron had been steaming with lights out, and the crowded troops had been doing their best to snatch a little sleep before they would be called upon. The boats and steam pinnaces had already been slung out, and now the signal was given for them to be lowered—each boat, in charge of a midshipman, and each pinnace towing three boats.

Twelve in all of these little processions were silently marshalled under the sides of the battleships, the moon having sunk now, and shore and sea living in the darkness before dawn. Battleships and pinnaces, with the boats streaming out behind them, then drew very slowly into shore, the battleships, cleared for action, stopping about a mile and a half out. There was to be no preliminary bombardment, since it was hoped—though none too confidently—to surprise the enemy; and, from this point, therefore, the pinnaces with the landing-parties crept toward the shore in absolute stillness. They had almost reached it, racing against the dawn, when the destroyers, with their additional troops, slid between the battleships; and it was then that a sudden alarm light—just before five o'clock—showed the Turks to have discovered their presence. Three minutes later, the boats being then in shallow water, a murderous rifle and machine-gun fire broke upon the beach, nothing being visible but the flashes from the guns above an entrenchment almost on the shore itself.

It was a critical moment, many men being hit at once, but the rest, tumbling out of the boats, dashed



ashore, made for the enemy in true Australian style, and, within less than ten minutes, had taken the trench. Afterward it was discovered that the landing had taken place a little to the east of the chosen spot; and the troops, having rushed the beach, found themselves in consequence faced by a steep and shrub-covered line of cliffs. But there was more cover here, although the enemy was firing down on them from the second line of trenches half-way up; and, having paused for a moment to take breath, shed their packs, and charge their magazines, they went for the cliffs and carried them, and, an hour later, had established a definite line along the ridge.

Meanwhile the rest of the covering troops had been landed, the whole being ashore within half an hour; and already the wounded were being evacuated, the two services going on together. It was now growing light, and, though the battleships came into action, the casualties on the beach grew more numerous. The trenches had been cleared, but, in the thick brushwood, the enemy marksmen found an ideal cover; and, as the day broadened, a couple of batteries, admirably concealed, opened fire. For many hours the battleships failed to locate them, and, all that time, under a hail of shrapnel, beach-masters, midshipmen, and seamen had to carry out their duties. For the actual troops it was less of an ordeal, since they could bolt across to the cover of the cliffs, but for the navy, marshalling the boats and moving them to and fro, there was no such respite. Owing to the heavy fire, too, both from

the howitzers inland and warships in the Narrows on the other side, the loaded transports had to stand farther from the shore, thus at once increasing and delaying the work. Without a moment's pause, however, it went forward, men, stores, and munitions being punctually landed; General Birdwood and his staff went ashore in the afternoon; and, before evening, roads were actually being built inland. All through the next day, the great movement went on, in spite of fierce counter-attacks by the reinforced Turks; and, by the nightfall of April 26th, the position at Gaba Tepe was secure.

Though five in number, the remaining landing-places were grouped within six miles round the point of the Peninsula; and the naval forces responsible for them were under the command of Rear-Admiral Rosslyn E. Wemyss. They consisted of the seven battleships, *Lord Nelson*, *Prince George*, *Cornwallis*, *Implacable*, *Swiftsure*, *Albion*, and *Vengeance*; of the four cruisers, *Euryalus*, *Talbot*, *Minerva*, and *Dublin*; of six sweepers and fourteen trawlers. Allotted to Y beach as the first covering troops were the King's Own Scottish Borderers, and they sailed from Mudros in the cruisers *Amethyst* and *Sapphire*. It had not been possible to effect a surprise here; and consequently, as the boats approached the beach, it was under a protective screen of fire from the battleship *Goliath*. So effective was this, and so promptly were the covering troops thrown ashore that they reached the top of the high surrounding cliffs practically without opposition.

Following a second detachment of the Borderers

came the Plymouth Battalion of the Royal Naval Division, the troops establishing themselves on the top of the cliffs, and trying to join hands with those landing at X beach. Unfortunately, between them there were strong hostile forces. They themselves were heavily and ceaselessly attacked; and, after twenty-four hours' fighting, it was decided to withdraw them—or rather what was left of them—under the fire of the battleships, the *Amethyst* and *Sapphire*, *Goliath*, *Talbot*, and *Dublin* undertaking their re-embarkation, ably supervised by Lieutenant-Commander Adrian St. V. Keyes. Thus, by the evening of the 26th, while Gaba Tepe had been secured, beach Y had had to be abandoned.

The action at beach X, however, just north of Cape Tekeh, had met with better results. Here the troops detailed to make the first landing had been two companies and a machine-gun section of the Second Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, and they had been embarked in the battleship *Implacable*. The beach before them was a narrow one, about two hundred yards long, but the cliffs beyond it were not high, and their ultimate objective was a hill that lay to the rear of the landing-places, round the corner, at W and V. Covered by the *Implacable*, who came close inshore, the troops landed with scarcely any casualties; and, though they did not succeed, owing to a very fierce counter-attack, in obtaining complete possession of the desired hill, they had, by the evening, with the aid of their supports, entrenched themselves for half a mile round their landing-place, besides having already joined hands, earlier in the day,

with the Lancashire Fusiliers who had advanced from Beach W.

This lay between Cape Tekeh and Cape Helles at the extreme end of the Peninsula, and was some three hundred and fifty yards long and from fifteen to forty yards deep. Flanked on each side by precipitous cliffs, the land in front rose less steeply, climbing in a series of low sand-hills to the ridge that lay beyond. It had been an obvious landing-place, however, and had, in consequence, been fortified with the utmost care. Not only had the water in front of it been mined but also the shore itself. Submerged entanglements covered the approach to it, and a jungle of barbed wire protected the sea's edge. The surrounding cliffs were heavily trenched and honey-combed with nests of machine-guns. The ridge itself, even should it be gained, was commanded on both sides by higher ground still.

To take this position, than which nothing could well have been stronger, fell to the First Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers, who had been conveyed to their rendezvous by the *Euryalus* and *Implacable*, from which they had embarked, at four o'clock in the morning, into the small boats. An hour later, and while these were approaching the shore—there had been eight picket-boats, each towing four cutters—the *Euryalus* followed them up and poured a heavy fire into the trenches. Farther out at sea, other units of the squadron supported the bombardment with guns of all calibres, but without doing much damage to the well-designed trenches and scarcely any to the beach entanglements.

Hung up by the wire or staked under water, an easy mark for rifle and machine-gun, men fell so thickly that, for a few minutes, it seemed as if indeed their task were a hopeless one. But they were not to be denied; hacking at the wire, as one man fell, another succeeded him; while, upon the extreme left, where it was just possible to effect a landing upon some rocks a detachment climbed ashore, and, with great skill, put out of action some enfilading maxims. Thus supported, their comrades made a little headway; and, once having gained a footing, never stopped. By ten o'clock, three of the enemy's trenches had been taken; and, by half-past eleven, they were in touch with the X landing-party. The actual beach was now secured, although the general position was still hazardous, and remained so until the next afternoon, when the landing at beach V had been consolidated. Throughout the whole time, in a widening semi-circle, a fierce infantry action was in progress; but, though the shore was under fire, thanks to the expedition and coolness of the beach-masters, Captain Townsend and Commander Collard, and the courage of all concerned, the remaining troops were safely landed.

Terrible as were the conditions, however, at beach X, those at beach V were even more so; and it was here that the self-sacrifice demanded of navy and army alike reached its sublimest level. We have said that no stronger defensive position than that of beach W could well be imagined; but that of beach V presented a problem that, in certain respects, was even more difficult. Of about the same size and much the



same formation, it was more strongly flanked on either side—by sheer cliffs on the west and by the village and Fort of Sedd-el-Bahr on the east; while brooding above it, in the centre, as above the amphitheatre of a circus, stood the battered ruins of the old barracks, a perfect cover for sharpshooters and maxims.

Here, as at beach W, there were dense wire barricades, and the high ground between had been similarly fortified. Nor was it possible here, as it had been for the Lancashire Fusiliers, to land even the smallest detachment on the flanks. A frontal assault was the only possible one, and accordingly special measures had been taken. As in all the other cases, the first landing-parties were to be towed ashore in small open boats, but the remainder of the covering troops, about 2,000 strong, was to be landed from a larger vessel designed for the purpose. This was the converted collier, the *River Clyde*, in charge of Commander Edward Unwin, and large doorways had been cut in her sides to enable the contained troops to pour out rapidly. As soon as the first boats had made good their landing, the *River Clyde* was to be run ashore, and a string of lighters pushed out from her side to form a bridge for the emerging soldiers. Mounted in her bows, and protected by sandbags, were several machine-guns to cover the operation.

The troops to whom had been assigned this, the most dangerous of all the day's undertakings, were the Dublin Fusiliers, of whom three companies were to land from the open boats, the remainder coming ashore from the *River Clyde* with the Munsters,

Hampshires, and other forces. Here also, as the collier and boats drew in, the battleships in the rear maintained a tremendous bombardment, but here, too, the effect on the defences was so slight as to be negligible. Till the boats actually touched shore, the Turks reserved their fire and then opened simultaneously with devastating results. In several of the boats there was not a single man who escaped either death or disablement. One of the boats disappeared altogether; another contained only two survivors. Of the few who scrambled ashore alive, some were killed on the wire, others fell on the sands half-way up the beach; and but a small handful managed to reach a little ridge, some four feet high, under which they took shelter.

For the boats to return again was impossible; that any were beached at all was almost a miracle; and nothing has ever excelled the heroic determination of those responsible for navigating them. With dead and wounded men lying about them, themselves with but a moment or two to live, they plied their oars or gave their orders under that withering storm of lead and shrapnel. Such was Able Seaman Levi Jacobs of the *Lord Nelson*, who, after the whole of his comrades had been killed or wounded, took in his boat unaided and, when last seen, was standing up alone, trying to pole the cutter into shore.

Even more costly was the first attempt to land the troops from the *River Clyde*, though it justified its existence as a harbour of refuge and was the eventual means of carrying the beach. Commander Unwin had succeeded in grounding her almost simultane-

ously with the boats, and the lighters were run out through a tornado of fire, but failed unfortunately to reach the shore. This was chiefly due to the strong current and the almost instant slaughter of those at work on them. Time was the essence of the contract, however; every second counted; and already the first of the Munsters were pouring out of the ship. While willing hands fought with the lighters, they leapt, swam, and waded to the shore, some being drowned by the weight of their equipment, others shot to pieces by the enemy, and again but a handful reached the precarious cover of the same little parapet that was sheltering their comrades. Then the lighters were fastened up again; other troops began to rush them; and once more the pier broke down, the shoremost lighter swinging round with the current and shutting off the troops that stood behind it.

Now was the enemy's opportunity, and he made the most of it; the officers on the lighters shouted to their men to lie down, but, even so, half had already fallen, and many more were shot where they lay. It was in these circumstances that Commander Unwin himself set the most magnificent example of conduct. Leaving the *River Clyde*, he made for the lighters, and, standing waist-deep in the bullet-lashed water, he worked indefatigably to repair the bridge and secure the lighter against the thrust of the current. With him was Midshipman G. L. Drewry, who, after being wounded in the head, twice attempted to swim from lighter to lighter with a line. Failing to do so owing to exhaustion, Midshipman W. St. A.

Malleson then took up the task, succeeded, and, when the line broke again, made two further, but this time unsuccessful, efforts to repair it. No less gallant were A. B. Williams and Seaman G. M'K. Samson, the latter working on a lighter the whole day, until he was dangerously wounded, and the former, until he was killed, holding on to a line in the water, under the heaviest fire, for over an hour. Commander Unwin himself, almost frozen, had to return to the *Clyde*, where he was wrapped up in blankets, leaving the ship a second time to work at the lighters till he was injured in three places, and a third time, after he had been dressed, to save some wounded men lying at the water's edge.

It had become clear by this time, however, that on the present lines, at any rate, the disembarkation could not proceed. Of the thousand men who had left the collier, half were dead or wounded, but fortunately the remainder were comparatively safe. Meanwhile the machine-gunners in her bow, as well as the ships at sea, kept up an incessant fusillade, both to protect the survivors under the sandbank, and to prevent a counter-attack by the enemy. Earlier in the day, the *Albion*, seeing the *River Clyde's* predicament, had called for volunteers to go to her help, and a pinnace and launch had been manned to assist in completing the bridge of boats. Owing to the murderous fire, however, it had been impossible to get into position; and it was not till dark that the work was finally completed, when the rest of the troops were at last able, though not without many casualties, to go ashore.

It was now essential to occupy the village, or rather the ruins, of Sedd-el-Bahr on the right; and, all through the night, fierce but unsuccessful efforts were made to this end by the tired troops. On the morning of the 26th, however, thanks to the heavy fire of the *Albion* inshore and other vessels farther out, a determined onslaught, heroically organized by Lieutenant-Colonels Doughty-Wylie and Williams, gained possession of it; and, by half-past one, the old Castle and its surrounding heights had been secured.

Two subsidiary landings had also taken place, one at what was known as the Camber, a little to the east of V beach, and near the village of Sedd-el-Bahr. Here a half company of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers had been landed to make an attack on the village, but, owing to the narrowness of the approach, they were able to make no advance, and had to withdraw after heavy losses. Finally, at S beach in Morto Bay, covered by the *Cornwallis* and *Lord Nelson*, the 2nd South Wales Borderers and a detachment of the 2nd London Field Company of the Royal Engineers—about 750 men in all—were successfully landed, largely due to the ability of Lieutenant-Commander Ralph B. Janvrin, who was in charge of the trawlers that brought them ashore. They suffered but few casualties, consolidated themselves in their assigned positions, and held these till April 27th, when they were joined by the general advance. Equally successful, in respect of its transport arrangements, was the French diversion at Kum Kale, the whole force being landed during the 25th. On the 26th, however, after they had beaten off many counter-attacks,



and taken over 400 Turkish prisoners, it became clear that they could only advance at a heavy cost and after fresh reinforcements; and it was decided to reëmbark them, this being effected without serious opposition.

So was obtained that footing upon Gallipoli, never, alas, to ripen into a complete conquest, but yet an achievement without parallel in the naval and military records of the world. Of the second great landing at Suvla Bay, four miles north of Anzac Cove, on August 7th, all that can be said here is that, before breakfast-time, two divisions were firmly established, and that once again, in Sir Ian Hamilton's words, the navy played father and mother to the army. Let a few brief facts, therefore, complete the picture of all that the seamen stood for at Gallipoli.

Between its base at Alexandria, 600 miles distant, and its front-line trenches, the army had but two harbours—Kephalos Bay on the Island of Imbros, about fifteen miles from the Peninsula, and the Bay of Mudros on Lemnos some four times as distant. When the expedition started, in neither of these harbours were there any conveniences whatsoever. Wharves and breakwaters, piers and storehouses, all were totally lacking. On the Peninsula itself, as we have seen, each of the landing-places was an open beach. Each was exposed, throughout the whole occupation, to registered and observed artillery fire. At two of the most important of them—Suvla and Anzac—only lighters and tugs could be used for disembarkation; two trans-shipments were thus always necessitated; and nothing could be landed except

by night. All were peculiarly exposed to the weather, as were also the harbours on Imbros and Lemnos; and, in addition to this, after the month of May, there was the ever-present menace of hostile submarines.

Nevertheless the army was well maintained in food, equipment, and munitions; it received its full supply of winter clothing at the beginning of December; the sick and wounded were punctually removed; and letters and mails were regularly delivered. So also in the final act, in the amazing evacuation, so swiftly and bloodlessly carried out, the navy received to its arms again and silently transferred the last man of those war-worn legions.

Of the statesmen and strategists responsible for the general campaign, judgments may well differ, though they should be lenient—every issue being so vitally involved with issues as large all the world over. But of the hewers of wood and drawers of water, of the human instruments of their policy, there can be no doubt in any man's mind, however unfamiliar with the tasks allotted to them. Not even the gods on Mount Ida ever looked down upon finer men.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUB-MARINERS OF ENGLAND

Before us rocked the minefields,  
Behind us flew the planes,  
The swift destroyers chased us  
Down the long sea lanes,  
The stealthy currents fought us,  
And, everywhere we went,  
Crept Death, a little finger's breadth,  
Beside us on the scent.

**L**INED with forts that defied the bombardment of our largest naval guns; protected by minefields that taxed the resources of our most intrepid fleets of sweepers; endowed by nature with an opposing current against which our destroyers, during some of the winter storms, were only able to maintain their stations by steaming ten knots ahead, the Dardanelles, guarding the Sea of Marmora, might well have seemed secure against our submarines. How little they were really so, was, however, made clear by Mr. Asquith in his summary of their achievements up to the end of October, 1915—a couple of months before the evacuation of the Peninsula and our withdrawal from the campaign. Up to that time it appeared, that, between them, they had sunk or damaged two Turkish battleships, five gunboats, one torpedo-boat, eight transports, and no less than 197

supply-ships of all kinds—an amazing record in view of the geographical advantages that had been bestowed upon the defence.

Where all were heroes, in the best sense of the word, carrying their lives in their hands on each trip, and where the unsuccessful, in defining the obstacles that baffled them, contributed almost equally to the general results, it is a thankless task, though the only possible one, to select particular units for our purpose. Just as in the Baltic, however, the two outstanding figures were Commander Horton and Captain Cromie, so in the Dardanelles the names that naturally emerge are those of Lieutenant-Commander Holbrook, Lieutenant-Commander Nasmith, and Lieutenant Guy D'Oyly Hughes; and it is to the adventures of these officers, as typical of their service, that we must confine our attention.

It was on Sunday, December 13, 1914, that Lieutenant-Commander Norman Holbrook, in the submarine *B11*, first demonstrated to Turkey and the world that the Dardanelles were navigable for British submarines; and, as a pioneer feat, it probably remains unequalled by any individual enterprise of the war. Then about twenty-six, Lieutenant-Commander Holbrook had been in command of the *B11* for a year, the submarine herself, one of an early type, being part of the Malta Flotilla, and, at the time of this exploit, already eight years old. Her speed above the surface was no more than 13 knots; and, when submerged, she could only travel 9—the mere navigation of the Dardanelles, under such circumstances, being in itself a remarkable achievement.

It was three o'clock in the morning that the *B11* left her base for the entrance to the Dardanelles, and no Elizabethan captain ever put to sea on a more perilous undertaking than that which faced the crew, less than a score, of the *B11* in that December darkness. They reached the entrance, however, unobserved, took their bearings with the current streaming past them, and then submerged to sixty feet, and began their blindfold journey toward the minefields. Here they had to rely entirely on their electric motors capable of about 190 horse-power; and so, for hour after hour, they felt their way beneath the five rows of mines that were known to be guarding the Straits, and, when at last they rose again, a little before noon, it was to find themselves bathed in broad daylight, and to discover to their delight, well within reach, the Turkish battleship *Messudiyeh*.

Still unnoticed, they submerged immediately, charged the firing-tank, flooded the torpedo-tube, and stood by to fire. Now was the critical moment—not of the journey, perhaps, but to demonstrate beyond question that it had been successfully accomplished. The *B11* crept up again to within fifteen feet. There was a fraction of a pause, and the torpedo was launched. This meant her discovery, of course, and, had not the torpedo gone home, a second chance could hardly have been expected. But it was a good shot, followed by a loud explosion, and a cautious peep through the periscope showed the *Messudiyeh*, completely surprised, to be sinking by her stern.

Built by the Thames Iron Works Company in



1874, she was of no great value as a battleship; and, although she had been reconstructed in Genoa in 1902, and carried two 9.2-inch guns besides a secondary armament, she was not in any sense a serious opponent, and her maximum speed was but 16 knots. But she was one of the only three battleships in the Turkish Navy; she carried a crew of 600 and was guarding the minefields; and the moral effect of her loss in so dramatic a fashion was profound. But a few years before, and this journey of Lieutenant-Commander Holbrook's would have seemed but the vain imagining of a novelist. Now it was a fact, and a fact that could be repeated, as others of his colleagues were to demonstrate.

Meanwhile the alarm had been given. The batteries on either side had opened fire and shells were beginning to plunge in all directions; and the *B11* modestly sought concealment. With torpedo-boats quivering the surface, she dropped into darkness again, and then, for a horrible moment or two, it seemed that her end had come. At a depth of thirty feet there came an ominous shock; for ten minutes, she grated along a bed of shingle; but her good luck held, and she slid at last undamaged into the deep channel that she had been looking for. So the return journey began; the five rows of mines were once more successfully passed; at a depth of sixty feet, she drew level with Cape Helles, and then, after nine hours below, she came to the surface again. Thus ended a voyage hitherto unequalled in the submarine records of any navy, and one that secured for Lieutenant-Commander Holbrook the first Victoria Cross

awarded to a naval officer since the beginning of the war.

Lieutenant-Commander Holbrook was a pioneer and his vessel was a comparatively old one, but scarcely less thrilling and, from the purely material standpoint, considerably more fruitful, was the voyage undertaken, about six months later, by Lieutenant-Commander Nasmith in the *E11*. Leaving Imbros at three o'clock one summer morning, he set out for the Dardanelles, dived at daybreak, and pushed his way, as Holbrook had done, beneath the defences of the Narrows. Emerging on the other side of these, he rose to the surface and saw a couple of battleships within range. By this time, however, the standard of vigilance above the Narrows had been very considerably raised; and, before *E11* could discharge any of her torpedoes, her presence was discovered, and the ships escaped.

They opened fire as they did so, thus giving the general alarm, and the *E11* accordingly submerged for the rest of the afternoon, not showing her periscope again till dusk, when she apparently had the sea to herself. She then proceeded, in naval phrase, into the Sea of Marmora at her leisure, but for a few days was unable to get in touch with any enemy craft. Not satisfied with this, she then made her way to the neighbourhood of Constantinople, where, on Sunday morning, she sighted and sank a big Turkish gunboat. This vessel went down in five minutes, but must have contained a gunner of some merit, since, before disappearing, she opened fire and with her second shot hit the *E11*'s periscope.

This was soon repaired, however, and the next day she sighted a steamer and told her to stop. An officer and two men were sent aboard her, where they found a 6-inch gun, numerous gun-mountings, and some 15-inch ammunition; and accordingly, after the crew had taken to the boats, this vessel was also sent to the bottom. Hardly had she vanished when another steamer was sighted and, refusing to stop, chased into harbour, where she was torpedoed in the very act of making herself safe alongside a pier. A little later, yet a third vessel was seen and also chased to the shore; and then there ensued one of the strangest little actions that had been fought during the course of the war. For, at that moment, a body of Turkish cavalry came galloping up to defend the ship, and opened fire on the submarine, just as a boarding-party was about to leave her. For a few minutes, a duel followed between the *E11* and the horsemen on shore, some of the latter being dropped from their saddles before the submarine dived and torpedoed the ship.

Monday had been a busy day, but on Tuesday Lieutenant-Commander Nasmith decided to enter Constantinople. In this he was successful, and, having made the harbour, torpedoed and sank a transport loaded with troops, exploding a second torpedo upon the shore, and creating a very considerable local panic. From Tuesday to Friday time passed uneventfully, but, on Friday morning, a convoy was sighted, consisting of five transports escorted by destroyers. Selecting the first and biggest, this was torpedoed, sinking in less than three

minutes, the others escaping, and the *E11* successfully evading the destroyers. Three more of these transports, as well as a supply-ship, were sunk a day or two afterward, and, a few days later, yet another transport was torpedoed, and a last one, on the way home, was sunk just before entering the Narrows.

With a round dozen vessels to her credit, the *E11* then dived beneath the minefields, and might well have been thought to have had sufficient adventures for one small vessel in a single trip. But there was another in store for her that might readily have been her last for, when she came to the surface again that evening, it was to discover a mine, like a piece of seaweed, hanging over her bows and caressing her side. It was a perilous moment, but, in the words of one of her crew, the mine was "chucked" off as speedily as possible, and the *E11* safely received into the waiting arms of her escort. For this voyage Lieutenant-Commander Nasmith also received the Victoria Cross, and every member of his crew the Distinguished Service Medal.

This was a great record, but it was closely pressed by many of her colleagues, notably the *E14*; and we find her in the Sea of Marmora again in August doing her best to sustain it. This time her voyage was made conspicuous by an extraordinarily daring journey on the part of her second in command, Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes, who had already been decorated for his services in the earlier raid just recorded. His object was, if possible, to destroy a viaduct over which passed the Ismid Railway, skirting the coast; and, with this in view, on the night

of August 21st, he left the submarine, about sixty yards from the shore. In readiness for his attempt, a raft had been prepared, on which were carefully packed his charge of explosives, his clothes, a revolver, a sharpened bayonet, an electric torch, and a whistle.

Dropping into the water, he pushed this before him, and swam warily to the shore, but found himself unable, at his first point of landing, to scale the cliffs that were here very precipitous. Accordingly he pushed out his raft again, and swam along the coast until a more promising ascent revealed itself, where he dressed, loaded himself with his charge, and, after a very steep climb, reached the top of the cliffs. Half an hour later, making his way inland, he came upon the line of the railway, and then, carrying his charge, began to creep quietly along it in the direction of the viaduct.

This he did for about a quarter of a mile, when he suddenly heard voices ahead of him, and presently saw three men sitting by the side of the railway, talking together loudly, and evidently quite oblivious of him. Crouching in the darkness, he watched them for some little time, and then decided to leave his heavy charge where it was, and, after having made a wide detour inland, inspect the viaduct and see how it was guarded.

Having marked the spot, therefore, where he had concealed his charge, he struck away from the railway into the unknown country beyond, and here he very nearly came to disaster, owing to an unlucky stumble into a small farmyard. The poultry scuttered about



calling, but happily without rousing the family, from whose undisturbed dreams it would surely be true to say that nothing could have been remoter than the vision of a British naval lieutenant, cursing under his breath, in the middle of their fowl-run. He was soon well away from this, and not very long afterward was within three hundred yards of the viaduct, where it soon became clear that there was very little prospect of his being able to secrete and fire his charge. At the end of it nearest to him, he could see a bright fire burning and the figures of several men moving to and fro, while the panting of an engine could be heard through the night, either on the viaduct itself or just beyond it.

There was nothing for it, therefore, but to make his way back to the place where he had hidden his explosive, and to find as suitable a spot in which to discharge it as the circumstances would allow. After a further search, he discovered a low brickwork support, carrying the line over a small hollow, and it was beneath this that he finally decided to place and explode his charge. Unfortunately the three men, whom he had first seen, were still sitting chatting by the line, and the spot selected was no more than one hundred and fifty yards away from them.

There was no other place, however, where so much damage could be done, and muffling up the fuse pistol with a rag, he discharged it. But the night was so still and the men were so near that for them to hear the report had been inevitable. Instantly they were on their feet and running down the line, and there was nothing for it but to take to his heels, the three

men following at the top of their speed, a couple of revolver shots failing to check them. They too fired, but ineffectively, and the chase went on for about a mile, Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes deciding that it was impossible to try and return the way he had come, and making down the line till he came to a place where it ran out beside the sea.

Just as he reached this, he had the satisfaction of hearing a loud explosion in the darkness behind him, some of the débris falling into the water, nearly half a mile away, close to the waiting submarine. But there was not a moment to be lost, and, fully dressed, Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes plunged from the shore and swam as fast as he could for about a quarter of a mile straight out to sea. There he blew his whistle, but was unheard by the watchers on the submarine, this latter being behind a bend in the cliffs. Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes therefore swam back to the shore again, and, after having rested for a few moments, decided that there was no other course open to him than to swim round this bend. Day was already nearing, and, time being imperative, he threw away his pistol, bayonet, and electric torch; and it was not until he had rounded the last point that his whistle was heard by the watchers on the *E11*. But others had heard it, too, and, from the top of the cliffs above him, there began to float down shouts and the reports of rifle shots. Owing to a trick of the morning mist, too, the emerging submarine appeared to him at first to be three separate rowing-boats—the bow, the conning-tower, and the gun being responsible for this illusion. Once again,

therefore, he took to the shore with the intention of hiding under the cliffs, when, after climbing out of the water, he saw his mistake and shouted and signalled to his comrades. Eventually he was picked up by them forty yards out, almost on the point of exhaustion, and having swum, after no mean exertions ashore, nearly a mile in his clothes.

While the British submarines and their officers and crews were thus making themselves at home in the Sea of Marmora, a campaign as daring had already been begun in the similar enclosed area of the Baltic, Commander Max Horton in the *E9* being in this case the pioneer. This officer had already accounted for a couple of German men-of-war, the light cruiser *Hela* sunk in the previous September, and the destroyer *S126* put down three weeks later. It was early on a fine Sunday morning that the *E8* had sighted the *Hela* about six miles south of Heligoland. Two torpedoes were launched, and about half a minute after the second was despatched, the listeners on board *E9* had heard an explosion telling them that one at any rate had got home. A quarter of an hour later, the *E9* had emerged again to see the *Hela* listing heavily and apparently beyond hope of redemption; and, when she had next come to the surface, it was to find the cruiser gone and her first German warship to her credit. The destroyer had been sunk three weeks later, near the mouth of the Ems River and under the very guns of Borkum.

Such was the record of Commander Max Horton before he made his way into the Baltic in the following year, and began to operate there almost at the

same time as his colleagues established their mastery in the Sea of Marmora; and he was worthily succeeded by Francis Cromie, than whose personal story the war produced no stranger. Entering the Baltic in the summer of 1915, as a lieutenant-commander in the submarine *E19*, to die three years later, as an acting captain, in the most tragic of circumstances at Petrograd, few men can have played, in so short a time, such a bewildering variety of parts.

Having arrived in the Baltic, his first task was to combat as far as possible the importation into Germany of ore from the Swedish mines. To this end he organized, therefore, and he was the first to organize, a definite and coördinated plan of campaign; and this soon bore visible fruits, not only in the number of vessels sunk, but in the precautions forced upon the enemy. Within a few days, in the early autumn, no less than ten of these vessels were put out of action, the majority being total losses. Amongst the victims were the *Lulfa*, *Nicomedia*, *Gutrune*, and *Pernambuco*—all vessels over 3,000 tons; while, a few days afterward, five German transports were torpedoed and sunk, and a sixth forced to run aground. Of these no less than ten were the actual victims of Lieutenant-Commander Cromie himself in the *E19*.

His most notable feat in this year, however, was the sinking of the German cruiser *Undine*, which was engaged with some destroyers in protecting a train-ferry upon which Lieutenant-Commander Cromie had designs. Of the general spirit in which not only this particular expedition, but all his work was under-

taken, something can be gathered from a letter to his mother in which he describes his adventures as follows: "We did another fifteen hundred miles," he wrote, "this last trip. I went to bed for the first two days out with 'fluë,' and so directed operations from my bunk. We met a German submarine and had to dive in a hurry, and found ourselves down at 140 feet, before I could get out of bed to take charge. The third day we found a lot of 'wood' outside neutral waters, and, after a short chase, we made a lovely bonfire, being unable to sink the stuff. The 'inhabitants' left hurriedly, leaving a small puppy dog, which we rescued. Its father was a Great Dane, and its mother a pug, but considering it is a 'Hun' it is not half bad, and is a great favourite. Nothing travels by daylight since our last raid on the 'hen-run'; so my special haunt was very dull, and I gave it up after four days, and tried another spot where I knew train-ferries must pass. We had an exciting chase, but it was spoilt by two destroyers and a cruiser turning up. Guessing that they would come back again I lay low, and, sure enough, I caught the *Undine* in the afternoon. The first shot stopped her and put her on fire, but she was not going down quickly enough, so, avoiding the destroyer who was after us, I dived under the *Undine's* stern and gave her another from the other side. . . . We arrived in covered with ice."

Technically an expert of the highest order, modest and courageous, he was idolized by his men, and his conduct when once, off the port of Memel, the propellers of his submarine became caught in some



German nets, would have afforded ample reason for this, even had it not been an expression of a character already well known to them. Whether or no he had been taking a legitimate risk, for the predicament in which they found themselves, he instantly took the full blame. For several hours, they had tried in vain to free themselves, and it looked as if at last they had been outwitted. Calling his crew together, he frankly confessed to them that he had taken them into this trap and that he saw no way out. His intention was, therefore, if the worst should come to the worst, to rise to the surface and give them a chance for their lives, he himself remaining below to blow up the vessel and save it from capture. Happily, by a last skilful and well-planned manœuvre, he succeeded in freeing the propellers from the entanglement, and the *E19* was once more at liberty, having never been nearer death, to continue her career.

It was not only as a submarine commander of the first quality, however, that Cromie was unobtrusively making his mark, but as an organizer and administrator in charge of his flotilla through a period of ever-increasing difficulty. Busy, as he was, arranging for repairs and supplies, and safeguarding the moral of his men in strange and remote surroundings, he found or made time to learn the Russian language, with results quite impossible to over-estimate. By the end of 1916, he had acquired—let us rather say there had come to him—a reputation extending far beyond the little technical world of the British submarine contingent. For patent efficiency, complete,

honesty, and entire fearlessness, there are no international boundaries; and in Cromie there were added to these a very remarkable patience and deep human sympathies. It was these qualities, recognized by all parties, that, throughout the abrupt and dark changes of the Russian Revolution, invested Cromie with an unique influence, responsible for the saving of scores of lives.

Stationed at Reval, it was largely due to Cromie that, when the naval mutiny broke out in the Russian Fleet, many officers were saved from the fate that befell their less fortunate colleagues at Helsingfors and Cronstadt. With his headquarters on the Russian cruiser *Dwina*, Cromie lived through the spectacle of beholding his own Russian servant appointed to the command of the vessel; yet, though he had vigorously deplored the formation of the committees that took over the charge of the Fleet and appealed to them in vain to uphold the discipline vital to the preservation of the Russian navy, their personal respect for him enabled him to hold his flotilla together and even to carry on offensive warfare.

It was not for very long, however, that this continued possible. The débâcle that had set in could not be stayed; and, after the treaty between Germany and the Bolshevik Government had been signed at Brest-Litovsk, hope flickered out. There was then nothing left but to destroy the British submarines, and for their gallant crews to return home; but Captain Cromie, as he had then become, was appointed naval attaché at Petrograd.

Here he carried into a new and perilous sphere the same qualities that had already distinguished him, and his influence with all sections was of a kind possessed by no other British representative. Even when the British Embassy was withdrawn, he remained at his post in spite of the fast-accumulating threats of hunger, pestilence, fanaticism, and German intrigue. He was at last to die, at Bolshevik hands, in a Petrograd brawl in September, 1918; but yet without leaving, in spite of the madness that slew him, a real enemy in Russia.

A bold and skilful seaman, a first-class organizer and leader of men, a naturally sagacious diplomatist, he was of a type not too common even in the navy itself. A Chevalier of St. George, in the case of Francis Cromie, it may be said that the words, indeed, bore their literal meaning, and few of our losses in the turmoil of war were less reparable than his

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND

**WE** HAVE seen Admiral Cradock, fighting against odds, sunk in the Southern Pacific; Admiral Sturdee victorious in the battle of the Falkland Islands; Admiral Beatty chasing the German raiders back to their minefields over the Dogger Bank; Admirals Carden and de Robeck battering the Turkish forts from the *Ægean* and the *Dardanelles*; British lieutenants harrying the enemy in the recesses of the *Baltic* and the *Sea of Marmora*; British yachtsmen patrolling the home coasts in search of German submarines; British fishermen in steam trawlers sweeping the fairways for enemy mines; and British liners, guarded by cruisers and destroyers, gathering up troops from the ends of the earth. If we have not seen, we have been conscious behind these of a host of craft of every description—bringing sheep from *Australia*, horses from *Uruguay*, and grain from the *Argentine* and *American prairies*; of *Tyne-side* colliers battling through the *Bay* with coal for *France* and *Italy*, so woefully short of it; of munition ships, laden to their utmost capacity, crossing daily to the *French ports*; of letters and parcels by the thousand million always afloat on every sea. We have seen that admiralty alone, and the sons of

admiralty, were the guarantee of that stupendous traffic; and we have seen that the bedrock upon which the whole rested, and with it the dearest ideals of human freedom, was the Grand Fleet, based on its northern harbours, standing sentinel over Germany's navy. Upon its integrity all depended. Any disaster to it would have been irreparable. And when it is remembered that there were many days when its margin of effective superiority was small—when some ships were absent being refitted and others were suffering from mechanical defects—it becomes clear that no British admiral was ever in a parallel position to that of its commander.

At the Battle of Trafalgar, for instance, Nelson was in command of but one section of the British Fleet, and the forces vanquished by him were far from representing the whole sea-power of the enemy. Had Nelson been defeated or even annihilated, the command of the sea would not necessarily have passed from us. Other squadrons would have been speedily collected and the enemy again challenged. But now, for the first time, practically all our battle units of real fighting value had been placed and were assembled under the command of a single leader—and with them our empire, the world's liberty, and the fate of every army then fighting for it.

That must have been, then, the root fact in the mind of its Commander-in-Chief—the “Hell-fire Jack” of earlier years—and in no operation could he allow himself to forget it. Ashore it was different. Here a key position, a province, even an army might be lost—might at any rate be gambled with justifi-



ably—and the ultimate victory still not be compromised. But at sea it was not so. Nor was the German navy in any sense comparably placed. Its capital ships might be sunk or destroyed without the empire behind them falling to the ground. It could therefore afford to take chances denied to the British, and it was to find them doing so that the Grand Fleet yearned. For this its outposts probed the Ems and the Weser, and the Grand Fleet itself swept the seas. But it was a long vigil, though not so long as Nelson's, watching the Toulon Fleet for over two years; for the Jutland Battle, as decisive at sea, though not at once so demonstrably so, as that of Trafalgar, was fought within twenty-two months of the outbreak of the war. During that time, as we have seen, a continual marine struggle had been in progress; there had been a few collisions of capital ships; and the Grand Fleet had been constantly on patrol. But there had been no pitched battle on a grand scale; and it had even begun to seem that there never would be. Time after time, for its exercises, the Fleet would vanish silently from its berths. There was hardly a day when some fraction of it, large or small, would not be away at sea—sailing so unobtrusively, even to those most intimate with it, the wives and families of its men and officers, that they would not be aware of its departure till the empty berths told them the secret.

That was the position then, when, on May 30, 1916, the Grand Fleet left its harbours—a fleet that covered when cruising, and this must always be remembered in considering the events that followed,

an area somewhat larger than the County of London. It was a lovely afternoon of almost summer warmth, with a clear sky ashore and a promise of settled weather; and, as usual, the Fleet put to sea in two main divisions. Of these the southernmost and faster, consisting of the First and Second Battle-Cruiser Squadrons, had left the Firth of Forth under Vice-Admiral Beatty—the former being composed of the four famous “Cats,” as they had been christened, the *Lion*, the *Tiger*, the *Princess Royal*, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral O. de B. Brock, and the *Queen Mary*; and the latter containing the *New Zealand*, under Rear-Admiral W. C. Pakenham, and the *Indefatigable*. Besides these, Admiral Beatty had four of the latest battleships of the *Queen Elizabeth* class—the *Barham*, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Evan-Thomas, the *Valiant*, *Warspite*, and *Malaya*. With him were also the First, Second, and Third Light Cruiser Squadrons and the First, Ninth, Tenth, and Thirteenth Destroyer Flotillas. Under Admiral Jellicoe to the north there had issued out from Scapa Flow the main body of British sea strength—Admiral Jellicoe’s flagship, the *Iron Duke*, sailing with the Fourth Battle Squadron, and the other divisions of the Fleet being under the command of Vice-Admirals Sir Cecil Burney, second-in-command, Sir Thomas Jerram, and Sir Doveton Sturdee, and Rear-Admirals Alexander Duff, Arthur Leveson, and Ernest Gaunt.

Now to appreciate the significance both of these two main divisions and the composition of Beatty’s command—the swiftest and most heavily-gunned

vessels that had ever flown the White Ensign—there are two further considerations that must always be borne in mind. Placed as it was, the German navy could scarcely be brought to action against its own will, and the deployment in line of battle of so great a fleet in the North Sea—notably in its restricted southern area—would have been a matter of the greatest difficulty even on a clear day. It was Beatty's task, therefore, to lure the enemy, should he be encountered, into the arms of the Battle Fleet; and, for that reason, he had to be strong enough to engage considerable hostile forces, and yet not so strong as to scare them home again. He had to be swift enough to chase, but also swift enough to run away; and, in order that his mission might be fulfilled, it was essential that Jellicoe with his battleships should at once be not too distant and yet far enough away to escape the wide vision of the German aircraft. In a word, Beatty's squadron, cruising in accordance with the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, had been made both strong enough and swift enough to deal with any probable development. Remembering all this then, and to perceive more clearly the general trend of the approaching conflict, let us forget for a moment about Jellicoe's giants, and follow the fortunes of his junior.

Throughout the afternoon and evening of May 30th nothing had been seen of the enemy, and, though he had put to sea in full force on the morning of May 31st, steaming northward parallel to the Jutland coast, Beatty had not come into touch with him by noon. About that time, therefore, he turned

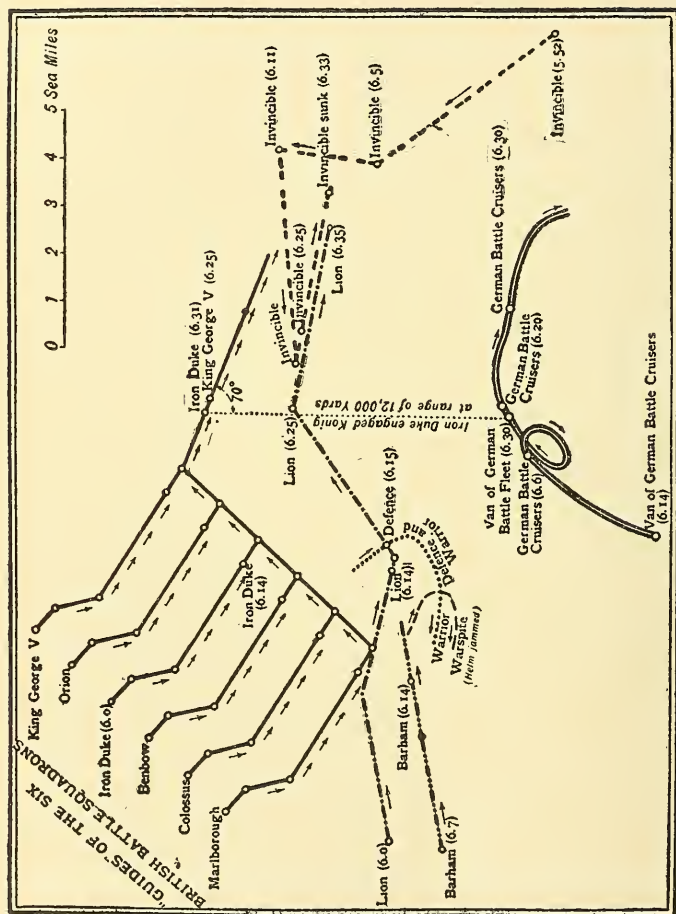
north again on his way to rejoin the Battle Fleet, with his light cruisers ahead of him, forming an extended screen, and the four super-dreadnoughts—the vessels of the *Queen Elizabeth* type—bringing up the rear. The weather was still fine, but the sea was hazy, and clouds had begun to overspread the sky. By this time, unseen by Beatty, the German Fleet, also in two divisions, was bearing to the northwest—Admiral von Hipper, with his five battle-cruisers, the *Derfflinger*, the *Seydlitz*, the *Moltke*, the *von der Tann*, and the *Lutzow*, being well in advance of the main force under the command of Admiral von Scheer—as far in advance indeed, at that moment, as Beatty was in advance of Jellicoe. Thus a bird's-eye view, taken just before two o'clock, would have shown the Jutland coast stretching north and south, a hundred-mile strip of more or less empty sea, lying almost unrippled to the east of it; then the thin line of the German Fleet steaming north and a little west, the dark smoke from its funnels lazily rolling in the same direction; then another strip of empty sea, from fifteen to twenty miles wide; and finally Beatty's squadron, with its light cruisers ahead, also steaming to the north—the two fleets drawing together on gently converging lines.

Twenty minutes later, from the light cruiser *Galatea*, flying the broad pennant of Commander E. S. Alexander-Sinclair, a message was received by Admiral Beatty in the *Lion* that enemy forces had been sighted to the eastward; and the order was at once given to alter course to the south-southeast to cut them off from their base. Five minutes

afterward, the *Galatea* signalled that the enemy was present in considerable strength—a signal also received by Admiral Jellicoe on board his flagship the *Iron Duke*—and, within ten minutes, a drift of smoke, far to the east, became visible to the *Lion*. Admiral Beatty now ordered the *Engadine*, the seaplane carrier attached to his fleet, to send up a seaplane on reconnaissance, and this was most promptly and gallantly carried out. Unable to fly, owing to the clouds, more than 900 feet high, she came under a fierce fire from the enemy cruisers, but brought back very valuable information.

The presence of enemy battle-cruisers ahead was now accurately known, and the course had been changed again to the northeast, the First and Third Light Cruiser Squadrons having spread themselves to the eastward to form a screen for the battle-cruisers. At half-past three the report from the seaplane was received, and, a minute later, enemy ships were sighted by the *Lion*, Admiral Beatty then forming into line of battle, and again changing his course, this time to east-southeast. All three Light Cruiser Squadrons were now ahead of the “Cats,” these being followed up by the *New Zealand*, and the *Indefatigable*, the *Barham*, *Valiant*, *Warspite*, and *Malaya* bringing up the rear a few miles behind. Von Hipper, with his five cruisers and accompanying mosquito-craft, had also turned to the southeast, and the two forces were again steaming parallel, and again slowly drawing together. For the moment, the Germans were considerably outnumbered, at any rate in capital ships, and Beatty had the advantage,





both tactically, in that the sun was in his favour, not low enough to silhouette him, and illuminating the enemy, and strategically, in that he was upon a course cutting off von Hipper from his base. On the other hand, he was, at the moment, and in accordance with a correct appreciation of his duty, drawing further away from Admiral Jellicoe and the Battle Fleet to the north; while von Hipper was aware that the whole German High Seas Fleet was hurrying to meet him from the south. For the German rear-admiral it was a race against time, and it cannot be denied that for the fifty minutes in which he was thus outweighed, his gunnery was as excellent as it had always been assumed that, in the first stages of a fight, it would be. It was only under the ordeal of casualties, both in men and machinery, that his accuracy began to waver and that of the British to increase; and it was while he was at his strongest, as it chanced, that Beatty's losses were most severe.

Joining battle about ten minutes to four, at a range of ten and a half miles, both sides pressed the attack with the utmost vigour, and it was within a few minutes of the opening of the engagement that the *Indefatigable*, struck on a turret over a well-filled magazine, was sunk, thus equalizing the numbers of the opposing battle-cruisers. Meanwhile the 15-inch guns of the great *Queen Elizabeth* had begun to speak at a range of fourteen miles, and, at the same time, submarines were reported on both sides of the line of battle. These were driven off by the destroyers *Lydiard* and *Landrail* and the Light Cruiser *Nottingham*, and, a few minutes later, a concerted destroyer-

attack was launched upon the enemy cruisers. This was conducted by the *Nestor*, *Nomad*, *Nicator*, *Narborough*, and *Nerissa*, the *Pelican*, *Petard*, *Obdurate*, *Moorsom*, and *Morris*, and the *Turbulent* and *Termagant*; and, almost simultaneously, a like attack was observed to be in formation on the part of the enemy, fifteen of his destroyers and a light cruiser being thus intercepted and engaged at close quarters.

By half-past four, therefore, the Battle of Jutland had already developed into the biggest of the war. Racing southward at thirty miles an hour were fourteen of the most powerful vessels in the world, belching half-ton shells in giant parabolas covering eight to a dozen miles of sea; while, in between them, and under the arch of their fire, were some thirty of the latest destroyers fighting a separate battle, as it were, at close quarters and with the greatest ferocity. On our own side, an 18,000-ton battle-cruiser had already been lost with most of her crew, while the enemy's third of the line was seen to be on fire in the mists now beginning to gather in the northeast. Two enemy destroyers were also sunk in the mêlée of the mosquito-craft; but, while they were driven back in disorder, our own torpedo-attack had been compromised, the destroyers, owing to this fight, having fallen some way behind the big battle-cruisers that were their objectives. They were thus at a distinct disadvantage, but nevertheless, having disposed of the enemy counter-attack, the three destroyers, *Nestor*, *Nomad*, and *Nicator*, proceeded on their original errand—where, for the moment, we may leave them chasing the enemy

battle-cruisers and being themselves heavily bombarded.

It was now twenty minutes to five, and a message from the *Southampton*, scouting ahead to the south, had suddenly transformed not only the immediate situation, but the entire future outlook of the action. Just below the horizon, but soon to be above it, was the whole of the German Battle Fleet—such were the tidings rapped out to his chief by Commodore Goodenough of the *Southampton*. So far Admiral Beatty's problem had been a comparatively simple one, and the forces at his disposal ample for its solution. But now he was to be thrown, for an indefinite period, into a position of almost crushing inferiority, yet with the possibility in front of him, if the enemy could be tempted to the point of rashness, of leading up to a victory of the first magnitude.

For another four minutes he held his course, and then, having sighted the German Battle Fleet to the southeast, he recalled his destroyers, and headed for the northwest, determining to take full advantage of his superior speed. Before doing so, however, he had sustained, at about half-past four, yet another and most serious loss in the sinking of the *Queen Mary*, after a violent explosion, caused by an enemy salvo. With the *Queen Mary* we are already familiar, owing to her presence at the Battle of the Bight; and, to her three fellow-members of the First Battle-Cruiser Squadron, her loss was irreparable. Between these splendid cruisers, the *Lion*, the *Tiger*, the *Princess Royal*, and the *Queen Mary*, there had grown

to be a bond of deep and justifiable pride—a sort of consciousness of each other's aristocracy, nonchalantly concealed, but not lightly to be challenged; while, apart from this, the *Queen Mary* was one of the finest gunnery ships in the Fleet. Something of the ordeal that she went through may best be gathered, perhaps, from the account afterward given by one of her rescued midshipmen.

"A salvo of German shells," he said, "hit the quarterdeck, setting the whole of that part on fire. A few minutes afterward a terrific explosion occurred in the second magazine. Both our guns were then right back on their slides and out of action. The general opinion was that the whole turret had been unseated by the German salvo. The officer of the turret told me that the ship was sinking rapidly and that I was to get the turret crew out as quickly as possible, which I did. The officer then told me to carry out the usual routine: 'Every man for himself.' I left the turret through the hatch on the top and found the ship was lying on her side. She was broken amidship, with the stern and bows both sticking out of the water at an acute angle. I sat on the turret for a few moments, and while there I thought I saw several men fall into the water. The stern was on fire and red hot. Then an explosion bléw the whole bow right out of the water, causing the after part of the ship to give a tremendous lurch, and throwing me off the turret into the water. Just before I struck the water, I heard another terrific explosion above my head, as apparently the after magazine exploded. When I came to the surface



of the water, nothing of the *Queen Mary* was to be seen, except a lot of wreckage, spars, and that sort of thing. The *Tiger* was steaming behind us during the action, and probably passed right over the spot where the *Queen Mary* had gone down. The *Queen Mary* took only about a minute to sink. I remained in the water a long time, clinging to a spar, and saw a destroyer come up, and saw her turn round and make off again. A few minutes afterward, the Fifth Battle Squadron (comprising the *Queen Elizabeth* type of ship) steamed past at about 23 knots, firing continually. The enemy shots were mostly falling short. One enemy shell exploded in the water close to where I was, and the concussion knocked me off my spar, causing me to lose consciousness. The next thing I remember was finding myself, about four hours later, in the forecastle of a destroyer. I was told that I had been picked up by their whaler about thirty-five minutes after the *Queen Mary* had been blown up. I was found on a large hatch which was floating in the water."

With the battle-cruisers swinging round to the north, the destroyers having been recalled, let us return for a moment to the *Nomad*, *Nestor*, and *Nicator*. Proceeding with their attack, the destroyer *Nomad* had soon been put out of action, but the *Nestor*, most spiritedly led by Commander the Hon. E. B. B. Bingham, had fired her third torpedo at the second of the enemy cruisers from a distance of less than two miles. Before being able to fire her fourth, she too had become crippled; while the *Nicator*, having to turn inside her in order to avoid a collision,

had been unable to fire her last torpedo, but had succeeded in escaping and rejoining her flotilla.

The position was now as follows—the Light Cruiser *Southampton*, obeying orders to reconnoitre, was still steaming south; the British battle-cruisers, led by the *Lion*, were steaming north, parallel to von Hipper; and the four 24-knot battleships, led by Admiral Evan-Thomas, were still on their original course, not having yet made the turn. This brought them, for a few minutes, into closer range of von Hipper's battle-cruisers, and it was at this stage that the German *Lutzow* was severely damaged, subsequently to be lost. This was von Hipper's flagship, and, leaving her in a destroyer, under the heaviest British fire, the German admiral, later in the action, transferred his flag to the Battle-Cruiser *Derfflinger*. A quarter of an hour afterward, the [four *Queen Elizabeths* swung round astern of Beatty; and it was now upon these vessels that the fire of von Scheer's approaching battleships began to be concentrated.

There had thus begun the second stage of this great battle, in which Beatty, confronted by odds that he could not face, was now heading to the north, and drawing the whole hungry German Fleet toward Admiral Jellicoe, some fifty miles away. Ahead of the *Lion* was the Light Cruiser *Fearless*, another memorable figure in the Battle of the Bight, and the destroyers of the First Flotilla; also ahead and to starboard were the First and Third Light Cruiser Squadrons; while, behind and to port, was the Second Light Cruiser Squadron—the Light Cruiser *Cham-*

*pion*, with the rest of the destroyers, remaining in touch with Admiral Evan-Thomas.

It was now past five o'clock and the weather conditions were becoming rapidly more unfavourable. Against the clearer sky to the west, the British vessels were far more clearly defined than the German, the latter passing in and out of the patches of mist, thus making the task of the British gunners one of the extremest difficulty. Nevertheless it was now that the British fire was definitely beginning to assert its superiority, while the shooting of the Germans, under their heavy punishment, was becoming increasingly more wild—the main brunt of their fire, during this northward race, being borne, as we have said, by the *Queen Elizabeths*. For some time, indeed, it would scarcely have been an exaggeration to say that the four of them were engaged with the whole High Seas Fleet; while some of them at least had the narrowest of escapes from being torpedoed by submarines. Thanks to their admirable handling, however, they came through unscathed, one of the enemy's submarines being certainly sunk.

By his rapid appreciation of the new position, his instant decision, and the course that he had taken Admiral Beatty was now ahead of the long parallel German line and slowly bending it toward the northeast, keeping within an eight-mile range of the leading cruisers. To von Hipper and von Scheer—the latter newly in command of the German High Seas Fleet—he must have seemed, for a few minutes, but a retreating and easy prey; but, a little to the northwest, the British Battle Fleet was hurrying at full

speed to his assistance—the space between them diminishing at the rate of forty-five miles an hour.

The most crucial moments of the whole engagement were now irrevocably approaching—moments that were to test, as they had scarcely been tested before, perhaps, the initiative and tactical skill of the commanding admirals. Already there was in progress a naval action extending over many miles of sea, and being fought under conditions of mist and fog of the most complex and baffling nature. It was an action that even then, involving every device of modern offensive warfare, had assumed proportions more titanic than that of any sea-fight ever fought; and there was now to be committed to it—and so committed to it that not a moment was to be lost—the mightiest battle fleet in the world and the one vital safeguard of the Allies. When it is further remembered that the situation, however accurately signalled by the engaged squadrons, was changing with lightning-like rapidity from moment to moment; and that the deployment—the dove-tailing, as it were—of the six parallel columns of twenty-four dreadnoughts into the line of battle-cruisers already formed would, under any circumstances, have been an operation of the most delicate nature, something may be conceived of the sort of task that Admiral Jellicoe had to undertake. By no other hand could this stupendous manœuvre have been more ably carried out, and, as a commander at sea, by the sternest of all tests, he proved himself among the finest that Britain has produced. Nor were his admirals unworthy of him either in their divination

of the movements demanded by their relative positions, or in the seamanship and machine-like precision with which such movements were carried out. Let us follow these, as far as possible, in the order in which they occurred.

Steaming in advance of the main fleet under Admiral Jellicoe, was the Third Battle-Cruiser Squadron, under Rear-Admiral the Hon. Horace A. L. Hood; and this had received orders from the Commander-in-Chief to find and support Beatty at the earliest possible moment. Led by the flagship *Invincible*, formerly Sturdee's flagship at the Battle of the Falkland Islands, the first sign of fighting was seen by them in the southwest about half-past five. Necessarily uncertain as to the exact position of affairs, Admiral Hood sent one of his light cruisers to reconnoitre—the *Chester*, which soon found herself fiercely engaged with three or four of the enemy's light cruisers. For nearly twenty minutes she fought single-handed, suffering a large number of casualties; but, thanks to the skill of her commander, Captain R. N. Lawson, and the devotion of all on board, she escaped comparatively unscathed, though with some honourable scars. It was during this action that John Travers Cornwell, a first-class boy, just over sixteen, though mortally wounded and with every member of his gun's crew lying disabled about him, remained alone, in a most exposed position, till the end of the action, awaiting orders—exemplifying a devotion to duty for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

It was now clear to Admiral Hood that he was too



far to the east, and, at the same time, Beatty had sighted the first of the reinforcing cruisers. Six minutes later, and five miles to the north, he caught a glimpse of the leading British battleships; and it was then that he judged the moment to have come to try and work between the enemy and his bases. To decide was to act, and, just before six, therefore, working up his engines to their highest capacity, Beatty altered the course of his ships to the direct east, closing the range. Some time before this, the destroyer *Moresby* had torpedoed the enemy sixth of the line, and, ten minutes after changing course, her fellow-destroyer *Onslow* torpedoed an enemy light cruiser.

While this was in progress, Admiral Hood with his battle-cruisers had come into sight, and, acting on Beatty's orders, had taken the head of the line in a manner, as Beatty said, worthy of his great ancestors. For a quarter of an hour, so fiercely did he attack, with the strenuous support of Admiral Napier and the Third Light Cruiser Squadron, that the enemy's leading ships were forced to the south and west, and the British line was already beginning, as Beatty had designed, to insert itself between the Germans and their coast-line. Unhappily at the close range at which Admiral Hood was now fighting—something less than four miles—an enemy shell found one of the *Invincible's* turrets, firing the magazine, and sinking her in less than two minutes.

The imminent approach of the British Battle Fleet had, of course, by this time become known to the German commander, and, indeed, it seems probable

that he mistook Admiral Hood's battle-cruisers for its leading ships. With the head of his line definitely menaced by Admiral Beatty's dash, he was on an easterly, becoming southeasterly, course; Admiral Beatty and his battle-cruisers were already threatening to intervene between him and his bases; and he now turned to starboard again, through south to southwest, in the endeavour to escape disaster, if that were possible. Moreover, the weather conditions that, for the last hour or so, had been almost wholly in his favour, were now beginning to tell against him almost as much as they were handicapping the British. One after another, his cruisers and battleships, emerging for a few minutes from the fog, would be instantly picked up and remorselessly hammered by the heavy guns of the British Battle-Cruiser Squadrons; while the leading battleships of the Grand Fleet were already beginning to fall into line behind these.

Meanwhile the four *Queen Elizabeths*, under Admiral Evan-Thomas, now considerably in the rear of Admiral Beatty, were still heavily engaged with von Scheer's battleships lower down his line and not yet turned. It had been the original idea of Admiral Evan-Thomas to follow up the battle-cruisers ahead of the Grand Fleet; but these were so far in front of him that it was clearly preferable—and indeed it was apparent that this would be Admiral Jellicoe's own view—that the Grand Fleet should deploy in the gap, Admiral Evan-Thomas himself thus bringing up the rear. At the same time, after the loss of the *Invincible*, Beatty had again placed himself at the head

of the line, the Third Battle-Cruiser Squadron taking station behind him, between the *New Zealand* and the on-coming Battle Fleet.

That all this should have taken place in the deepening twilight at great speed, and in spite of repeated torpedo-attacks, was the highest tribute, not only to the Commander-in-Chief, but to the seamanship and intuition of his supporting admirals—and here it must be remembered that, to a certain extent, Admiral Jellicoe himself had been taken by surprise. Between the position of the German Fleet, as it had been signalled to him, and the position in which he eventually came into contact with it, there was a difference of twelve miles—quite understandable in view of the conditions in which courses had been plotted, but none the less adding to the difficulties of the on-coming Commander. Thus, at five minutes to six, he was still uncertain of the exact whereabouts of the enemy—the utmost care was necessary in order to distinguish between our own and hostile vessels—and he was steering on a course, southwest by south, at a speed of 20 knots. It was scarcely avoidable also, under such circumstances, that there should have been a certain number of casualties; and it was while manœuvring in what we have called this gap that some of the cruisers ahead of the Battle Fleet found themselves not only too close to the enemy battleships, but, a few minutes later, between the enemy line and the advancing *Queen Elizabeths*. It was there that the *Defence*, under Rear-Admiral Sir Robert Arbuthnot, was blown up and sunk, and the *Warrior* so severely damaged that she was sub-

sequently lost, though not before they had disabled, between them, one of the enemy's light cruisers.

"At 5.40," said one of the *Warrior's* survivors, "we went to Action Stations, and, ten minutes later, we heard the first gun fired by the armoured cruiser *Defence*. A few minutes afterward, the *Warrior* fired her starboard battery's big guns, and then we slewed round and fired the port guns. We had not sent off more than a couple of salvos, when, looking out, I saw the *Defence* blown clean out of the water. We were then closely engaged with three German ships—a battle-cruiser and two light cruisers. Our first round went home. We had not been firing many minutes before we noticed that one of the enemy light cruisers was on fire, and big clouds of smoke were coming from her. Gradually we got to closer range (ten thousand yards), firing all the time; and we ourselves had been hit many times by heavy projectiles, and almost the whole of the afterpart of the ship was on fire. Finally, we got within 5,400 yards of the battle-cruiser, but we had only fired one salvo with all our guns when the *Warspite* came to our assistance. By that time our ship was almost helpless; our engine-rooms and stokeholds were flooded, owing to a projectile having penetrated below the water-line, so that we could not obtain steam for the engines. Shells or heavy armour-piercing shot had penetrated almost everything. The ship was also making water badly, and there was a fire in the after part of the vessel. Part of the ship's company was all this time engaged with the hose in trying to put out the fire, and the men not required for that were

set to work to construct rafts, for the ship was gradually settling down. At 6.30 the order was given to cease fire, for we had, by that time, lost all trace of the German Fleet, and the *Warrior* was regarded as being out of action. As soon as the fire was got under control, we commenced to identify the dead, who were that night buried (the funeral service being held the next day), and to get up the wounded. That being done, all hands were set to work at the pumps so as to keep the ship afloat, and we had to keep them going all night. Early in the evening—at 7.50—a seaplane depot-ship came alongside and took us in tow for ten hours. The *Warrior* settled down more and more all through the night. On the following morning, the sea was very rough. Early in the forenoon, the order was reluctantly given to abandon ship. The depot-ship again came alongside, and our wounded were all safely transferred to her. Then the ship's company and officers left the ship, and the last we saw of the *Warrior* was between nine and ten in the forenoon when she was rapidly settling down aft. We were naturally all very sorry to see the last of the grand old ship, but after all she came to a gallant end."

It will have been noticed that the *Warspite* is mentioned by this observer as coming to the *Warrior's* rescue; and this refers to an incident, occurring at this period, that was one of the most remarkable of the whole battle. While emptying salvos into von Scheer's leading battleships, the steering-gear of the *Warspite* became jammed; and, to the horror of her consorts in Admiral Evan-Thomas's squadron, she



suddenly began to describe a great circle toward the enemy. This immediately exposed her to the extremest, and what seemed an inevitably fatal, disadvantage, and she disappeared from sight behind a veritable Niagara of shell-spouts, smoke, and explosions. Presently, to everybody's amazement, she emerged again, stricken but not disabled, and replying vigorously, and then once more, still at full speed, proceeded upon the same astounding course. It was just before the *Defence* was sunk that her steering-gear became jammed; and it was while describing her two great circles that she drew the enemy's fire from the *Warrior*. To the latter, as we have seen, it seemed as if she had been deliberately doing this, and afterward her commander boarded the *Warspite* to tender his thanks—where Captain Phillpotts, whose skilful handling had brought his vessel safe home to harbour, while very pleased to have been of service, had regretfully to deny the imputed gallantry.

Another most brilliant action was fought at this time by the Third Light Cruiser Squadron, under Rear-Admiral Napier, the *Falmouth* and *Yarmouth*—the latter a distinguished member of the China Squadron before the war—both firing torpedoes and scoring a hit on the German battle-cruiser leading the line, the whole squadron then closing in and engaging these much more powerful vessels with their guns. Nor were the destroyers any less busy, though considerably outnumbered by the Germans, and the action of the *Shark* may be taken as typical both of their enterprise and devotion. Unhappily she was lost with her brave leader (also awarded the Victoria

Cross) Commander Loftus Jones, but, for ten minutes, she fought a fight according to the greatest traditions of her class.

“Right ahead of us,” said one of her survivors, “and close at hand, we saw two columns of German destroyers. We were racing along at the time, and our skipper took us at full speed right toward the enemy lines. There was a column of their small craft on either side of us, and, as soon as we got abreast of them, we attacked at close range, and managed to torpedo a couple of enemy destroyers, one on each beam. All the time we were getting it hot. Guns were popping at us from all quarters, and we were firing back as hard as we could go, as well as using our torpedo-tubes. Of course a fight under these conditions could not last long for us. We had been engaged about ten minutes when two torpedoes hit fairly, one on each side of our ship, and ripped three holes in her, so that she sank almost at once. I and some others sprang on to a raft, where we stayed for five hours watching the battle—and there was something to look at. Zeppelins, torpedo-craft, submarines, and big ships were all there. Shells fell like hailstones into the water, and we could see the small craft getting it badly. The enemy losses in destroyers must have been very great, for whenever one got a big shell in her she was done. Some of them I saw hit went down like stones. Apparently there were a lot of German submarines, and they seemed to be very busy, but my impression is that a good many of them were done for by our ships running over them. The fire of the big ships was enough to stun anybody

with the noise it made. I saw five German battle-ships and battle-cruisers; they looked as though they were all firing at one time at one of our cruisers. The Germans seemed to be concentrating their fire upon one ship at a time as much as they could—a lot of these big ships would all turn the whole of their guns upon one of our cruisers, and then do the same thing to another. This meant a tremendous battering for the ships they fired at. You can imagine what it was to face these salvos from four or five of their vessels pouring upon one ship at the same time. I saw one or two ships go, but I could not give you any particulars about them, as there was so much going on that one could not grasp details very well. When I was picked up from the raft, I was about done, for it was very cold, and I had not much clothing on. Toward the latter part of the time, we had as much as we could to do keep life in ourselves. We kept our blood circulating by jumping overboard and swimming round the raft. All of us did this in turn, those on the raft hauling in the men who had finished their swim, and then going for a swim round the raft themselves. As it was, one of our men died from exposure before he could be landed.”

Meanwhile, in such circumstances and under such conditions, the deployment of the Battle Fleet had been carried through. It was not until fourteen minutes past six that Admiral Jellicoe received definite confirmation from Admiral Beatty as to the position of the High Seas Fleet; and, two minutes later, still on a course southeast by east, he ordered the Fleet to deploy into line of battle on the port

wing column, at the same time reducing speed to 14 knots in order to allow the battle-cruisers to pass ahead. For this manœuvre, since a starboard deployment would have brought him more rapidly into contact with the enemy, Admiral Jellicoe had several cogent reasons. In the first place, the High Seas Fleet was so near that, assuming its destroyers to be probably ahead of it, there would have been a very great danger, under the prevailing weather conditions, of a successful enemy destroyer-attack during deployment—and the consequent grave risk of the whole Battle Fleet being thrown into confusion. There would also have been the risk of the ships of the First Battle Squadron—inferior in many respects to the German, and our own weakest battleships—being very severely handled before our remaining divisions could get into line. Yet a third reason for the port deployment, in the estimated position of the German High Seas Fleet, was that the alternative would have meant a very large turn for every deploying division, in order to avoid the risk of being outflanked.

For these reasons, Admiral Jellicoe decided therefore—and it had to be an instant decision—to deploy in the manner described. The port wing division, therefore, stood on in a direction across the bows of the German Battle Fleet. The other squadrons followed, thus compelling the Germans to turn yet further to starboard to avoid being placed in a position of disastrous tactical disadvantage. By 6.33 p. m., the battle-cruisers were clear, and the speed of the Battle Fleet was increased to 17 knots; and,

by 6.38, deployment was complete, many of our battleships being already in action. Of these the first to be engaged were those of the First Battle Squadron, under Vice-Admiral Burney, his flag-ship, the *Marlborough*, especially distinguishing herself by the rapidity and effectiveness of her fire. Between a quarter past six and a quarter past seven, she had engaged two battleships and a cruiser; been herself torpedoed; and then, in spite of this, had put out of action yet another enemy battleship. Admiral Jellicoe's own battleship, the *Iron Duke*, had begun to hit at her third salvo; and, throughout the action, the Grand Fleet's gunnery maintained the highest standard. As a German officer afterward admitted, "We were utterly crushed from the moment your Battle Fleet came into action."

With the third phase of the battle, however, that would have seen, on a clear summer evening, the annihilation of the German Fleet, the weather had so changed, that only with the greatest difficulty was the enemy kept in sight at all. For a few minutes, about half-past seven, Beatty was able to engage, setting a ship on fire; but soon the fog was thicker than ever, and he had to send his light cruisers to locate the enemy. Three-quarters of an hour later, the line was found again, the *Lion* setting the leading ship on fire, and the *Princess Royal*, *New Zealand*, and *Indomitable* crippling and setting fire to two others.

That, as it turned out, was the last action fought by any of our capital ships; and it would be well, perhaps, to pause here for a brief survey of the general position of the two fleets. Admiral Beatty, still at



the head of the line, was by now far to the south and shaping a southwesterly course, the Battle Fleet streaming behind him, to the north, and then to the west, somewhat in the shape of a vast hook with its shaft tilted toward the northwest. Within this hook, the enemy's line, broken in many places, was struggling homeward—the shaft of the hook already lying well between him and his bases. It was such a predicament as, but for mist and darkness, must undoubtedly have proved fatal; and it must be confessed that von Scheer showed considerable skill in making all possible use of his respite.

Superior in destroyers, he did his utmost, by putting up smoke-screens and ordering torpedo-attacks, to add to the difficulties of our capital ships in bringing his own to close quarters; and, during the night, after sustaining heavy casualties—more particularly in *personnel*—he succeeded in rounding the shaft of the hook and bringing his shattered forces home to port. Of that wild night, therefore, the picture resolves itself into one of destroyers and light cruisers searching the darkness; of flying glimpses of enemy units; of fierce but momentary bursts of fire. Thus, at twenty minutes past ten, the Second Light Cruiser Squadron fought a quarter of an hour's engagement with five enemy cruisers; at half-past eleven, the *Birmingham* sighted two capital ships making their way southward to be lost in the night again; an hour later, the *Petard* and *Turbulent*, two destroyers, were suddenly transfixed by the searchlights of a retreating battleship, the *Turbulent* being sunk by the enemy's secondary armament as she raced past,

seeking safety. The destroyer *Tipperary*, with her commander, Captain Wintour, the leader of the Fourth Flotilla, was also lost, but not before the flotilla had inflicted severe casualties upon the enemy. Another organized destroyer-attack was that of the Twelfth Flotilla, under Captain A. J. B. Stirling, in which a large detachment of the enemy was taken by surprise, one of his vessels being blown up and another hit.

So the night passed, never to be forgotten by any who lived through it, and, for only too many, slipping benumbed off rafts and wreckage into the water, or going down in the roar of explosions, the last night of all. "When a battleship is hit and seriously damaged," afterward wrote the famous American, Admiral Dewey, "there is no way of knowing whether or not she is about to sink. It may be possible that she will remain afloat for hours, or that she may not sink at all. Her purpose is to continue to damage the enemy to the greatest possible extent. A single final shot fired from a sinking ship may be the blow that will turn the tide of battle and the destiny of empires. The damaged battleship, therefore, continues to fight. The men remain in the fire room, in the turrets, at their guns. Every man continues that particular job which is his in fighting the ship as long as she may strike a blow. It therefore happens that, when a battleship goes down, there is practically nobody on deck, and there is no man who may leave his post in time to put on a lifebelt or launch a raft. Quite naturally, every man dies with the ship."

In this way Admirals Hood and Arbuthnot and many a gallant sailor, long to be remembered, went down with their ships, though, despite all risks, when the run of the battle permitted, rescues were attempted and often with success. A typical example of this was the action of the destroyer *Defender*, under Lieutenant-Commander Laurence R. Palmer, who, herself having been severely damaged by a 12-inch shell in her foremost boiler, struggled to the assistance of the *Onslow*, under Lieutenant-Commander J. C. Tovey, who had been rendered helpless by an enemy shell.

This latter destroyer, having sighted a light cruiser about to attack the *Lion* with torpedoes, had at once assailed her with the utmost spirit, closing to within a range of a little over a mile, and firing no less than fifty-eight rounds at her. She had then proceeded to attack some enemy battle-cruisers, and had already fired one of her torpedoes, when she was struck by a shell; and her commander, thinking his torpedoes all gone, had then ordered her retirement. Learning, however, that he still had three torpedoes left, he again attacked and torpedoed the light cruiser, with which he had been previously engaged, sighted some more battleships and loosed the rest of his torpedoes, before his vessel gave out and came to a standstill. It was while thus drifting helplessly, and with shells plunging all about her, that the *Defender*, whose own speed had been reduced to about ten knots, came alongside and took her in tow. Twice during the night, owing to the rising sea, the tow between these two heroic cripples became parted,

and twice it was made good, the two journeying together till the afternoon of the following day. Lastly must be mentioned the *Abdiel*, which, under the command of Captain Berwick Curtis, had been ordered by Admiral Jellicoe to lay mines behind the retreating Germans. This her great speed—40 knots an hour—and the gallantry of all on board enabled her to do, the flying enemy sustaining several casualties as the result of her enterprise and skill.

So ended the Battle of Jutland, as regarded the sea, the most gigantic that the world had known—for, when the next day dawned, June 1st, a day already glorious in British annals, it was to find the enemy gone and Admiral Jellicoe in unchallenged possession of the field. Breaking through mists, well-nigh as dense as those in which it had set, the sun rose and with it the hopes of the British admirals that the work of the night might be completed. Those hopes, alas, remained unfulfilled, for, when the fog cleared and the sea lay revealed, it became apparent that the enemy had fled, broken and dispirited, under the cover of darkness, and was in no mood to rejoin the battle that he was already proclaiming as a German victory.

Four hundred miles from its bases—in enemy waters, close to his very harbours—the Grand Fleet waited till eleven in the morning before reluctantly sailing for home. And it was this fact, in itself a proof of triumph, that was partly accountable for the immediate sequel. For there now followed, thanks to the precipitate German flight, and the enemy's neighbourhood to his bases; to the world's unfamil-

ilarity, after nearly a century, with the cost and criterion of naval success; and to the prompt and wholly unscrupulous use by the German Government of its wireless press agencies—an almost world-wide belief that the British Fleet had met with disaster.

With the Grand Fleet still at sea off its own coast, Germany flooded the world with the following statement: “During an enterprise directed toward the North, our High Seas Fleet, on Wednesday last, met a considerably superior main portion of the British Battle Fleet. In the course of the afternoon, between the Skager Rack and the Horn Reef, a number of severe and, for us, successful engagements developed and continued all night. In these engagements, as far as is at present ascertained, we destroyed the great battleship *Warspite*, the battle-cruisers *Queen Mary* and *Indefatigable*, two armoured cruisers of the *Achilles* class, one small cruiser, and the new destroyer leaders *Turbulent*, *Nestor*, and *Alcester*. According to trustworthy evidence, a great number of British battleships suffered heavy damage from the artillery of our vessels and the attacks of our torpedo-boat flotillas, during the day battle and during the night. Among others, the great battleship *Marlborough* was hit by a torpedo, as is confirmed by the statements of prisoners. A portion of the crews of the British vessels that were sunk were picked up by our vessels. On our side the small cruiser *Wiesbaden* was sunk by the enemy’s artillery in the course of the day battle, and, during the night, the *Pommern* by a torpedo. Regarding the fate of the *Frauenlob*, which is missing, and some torpedo-boats, which



have not returned up to the present, nothing is known. The High Seas Fleet returned to its harbour in the course of to-day."

This was the German version, by twenty-four hours the first in the field; and a certain kind of triumph undoubtedly followed it. In every neutral country, including America, heavily captioned newspaper articles proclaimed a British defeat—an impression hardly dissipated by the candour and caution of the first British official report. That our losses were heavy could not, of course, be denied, and they were instantly and frankly confessed. Six cruisers, including three battle-cruisers, and eight destroyers had paid the price of admiralty; while, on the other hand, the German losses were only grudgingly announced as it became impossible to conceal them. How heavy they were and how profound was the loss of moral that followed the Jutland defeat was only later to become manifest, though a good deal might have been guessed from the foregoing message. Further evidence, too, might have been deduced from the hurried visit of the Kaiser to Wilhelmshaven, and the almost hysterical exaggeration of his address to his broken fleet. There he assured them that "the gigantic fleet of Albion, ruler of the seas, which, since Trafalgar, for a hundred years, had imposed on the whole world a bond of sea tyranny," had "come out into the field," and had been beaten; that "a great hammer blow" had been struck; and that the "nimbus of British world supremacy had disappeared."

Such were the Kaiser's words, breathed into the

ear of the world to conceal the result of Jutland, if this might be done; and hardly was the armistice signed before they were openly given the lie by one of Germany's leading authorities. After the Battle of Jutland, said Captain Persius, so shattering had been its results for the German navy, it had at once become clear to all thinking men that no second engagement must be risked; and, even at the time, it soon began to be suspected by the rest of the world that this was the truth. As for the Grand Fleet itself it was content to wait. It knew that it had won, and it had long learned patience. Let the Kaiser harangue. To-morrow would come, and, with to-morrow, the truth would out. Meanwhile it rode the seas on its accustomed ways, while, behind its shield, and beneath its pressure, the armies of freedom poured into Europe, and the strength of Germany continued to crumble.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE DOVER PATROL

The kings and the presidents go their ways,  
Their armies march behind them,  
But where would they be,  
Said the man from the sea,  
Without us Jacks to mind them?

IT IS seldom possible, during the course of a war, to appraise the ultimate value of any single action; and it was only by slow degrees, as we have suggested, that the results of Jutland were to become visible. Not until the very end was it fully to appear that the enemy's capital surface ships had been so hammered and cowed as to have freed the seas of them with a finality equalled by no other naval fight in history. Presently, as we shall show, that proved to be the case; and, from now onward, he relied upon his submarines—it was early in 1917 that these reached their high-water mark of mercantile destruction—and occasional tip-and-run raids on the part of his destroyers based upon Zeebrugge and Ostend.

With regard to the submarine campaign, this was the most serious menace the Admiralty had been required to face; and it was to take charge of the grave situation, created by its initial success, that Sir John Jellicoe, to the sorrow of the Fleet and with

much personal regret, was called to the Admiralty as First Sea Lord in succession to Sir Henry Jackson.

This able officer had succeeded Lord Fisher on the latter's resignation in May, 1915—when the Gallipoli campaign had seemed to him finally to have made an end of his alternative policy—Mr. Balfour having become First Lord in the Coalition Government formed at the same time. In Admiral Beatty, however, both the navy and the nation felt that the Grand Fleet would be in capable hands—the changes taking place after friendly discussion between the officers concerned, in the *Iron Duke*—and Sir John Jellicoe returned to Whitehall to deal with as perilous a crisis as had ever faced the empire.

What had in fact happened was that, under the stimulus of war, both scientific research and achievement had advanced, as regarded the submarine, with unprecedented strides. From a range of scores to a range of hundreds and even thousands of miles, they had become effective. They had begun to attain a speed that put them on superior terms to the vast bulk of mercantile steamers; and they already carried guns that, before the war, it would have been thought impossible to mount, and that were in fact heavier than those carried by the earlier German destroyers. Nor had the measures of defence as yet overtaken those of destruction in the race for stability. The methods that, to a great extent, had been successful in dealing with the smaller submarines had become obsolete; and the devising of others, their practical application, and the safeguarding, in the meantime, of our mercantile marine—more than half a million

tons of mercantile shipping were, at this time, being sunk every month—were problems upon whose solution depended not only the victory of the Allied cause, but the actual physical existence of the people upon these islands.

Of the means ultimately adopted, of which it may at once be said that none was in itself a complete solution, it would be impossible, in the present volume, to give more than the briefest details. The plotting out of minefields for which 100,000 mines, of an improved type, were ordered by Admiral Jellicoe, and of which the most extensive was designed to stretch from the north of Scotland to the waters of Norway; the construction and employment on a vast scale of speedy patrol vessels of all descriptions; the regular use of aircraft, both for observation and the dropping of depth-charges; and the development of the convoy system with destroyer escorts, as the increase in the production of the latter justified this—it was rather to a combination of all these methods, and the skill and adaptability of the men employing them, that the ascendancy over this new weapon was slowly regained. Of one particular means, however, namely the employment of lure ships—armed vessels, variously disguised—no record of our naval activities from the personal standpoint could omit some account; and of the amazing courage and ingenuity with which the *Q* ships, as they were called, were handled, let the following couple of examples, chosen at random, sufficiently indicate.

Powerfully armed, but with a false screen disguising the extent of her armament, the apparently easy



prey, H. M. S. *Prize*, a topsail schooner of 200 tons, was sighted, on April 30, 1917, by a prowling submarine. This opened fire at about three miles range, and, according to plan, Lieutenant W. E. Sanders ordered some of his crew, as though in a panic, to lower a boat and push off. Meanwhile the ship's head was put into the wind, and the gun crews lay flat on the deck to conceal themselves. Still shelling the schooner and inflicting numerous casualties—borne in silence as part of the game—the submarine approached to within seventy yards, apparently satisfied that she had been definitely abandoned. That was Lieutenant Sanders' chance, and he made the fullest use of it. Running up the White Ensign, the screens were dropped, and every available gun opened fire. The submarine's conning-tower was blown to pieces, as was her forward gun, all of the crew of the latter being destroyed; while a machine-gun on the *Prize* raked her deck. In less than five minutes she was on fire and sinking in a cloud of smoke, her captain and one of her men being picked up and brought aboard the *Prize* as prisoners. The *Prize* herself, however, was now sinking fast; and it was only by the most strenuous efforts of all aboard that the holes in her were plugged and she was kept afloat till, two days later, she was found by a motor-launch.

Less successful, but equally representative of the work of these individualist adventure-ships, was the extraordinary action fought by the *Dunraven* in the following August. Commanded by Captain Gordon Campbell, who had already distinguished himself in

this particular form of warfare, the *Dunraven*, apparently an ordinary armed merchant-ship, sighted an enemy submarine on the horizon. Observing that the *Dunraven* continued her zig-zag course, the submarine at once set off in chase of her, remaining submerged till within less than three miles, when she came to the surface and opened fire. With what was seemingly her single gun, the *Dunraven* began to reply to this, at the same time sending out distress signals, by means of her wireless, in order to preserve her supposed character. Later, as the shells began to drop nearer, she lowered her "panic" party, being already herself then on fire aft.

Meanwhile the submarine had approached to within 400 yards, being obscured by the *Dunraven's* smoke; and, for this reason, though every moment's delay added to the risk of her after magazine's being blown up, Captain Campbell decided not to open fire until he could get a clearer view of his enemy. Unfortunately, before this happened, a heavy explosion revealed to the submarine the true nature of the *Dunraven* by accidentally starting her fire-gongs, one of her guns, with its gun crew, having been destroyed. There was no alternative, therefore, but to drop the screens—though only one gun could be brought to bear—the enemy submarine, taking alarm, having already begun to submerge. It was now obvious that the *Dunraven* would be torpedoed, and Captain Campbell took prompt measures. Removing the wounded, and concealing them in cabins, and bringing a hose to bear on the fire, he signalled that all traffic should be kept below the horizon during the final

act that was to come. Having been twice torpedoed, he then sent away a second "panic" party, and thus left the ship apparently forsaken, with all her guns unmasked and the White Ensign flying.

The fires had now to be left to work their will; ammunition was exploding on all sides; and, for fifty minutes, while Captain Campbell and those remaining with him still lay hidden, the submarine cautiously surveyed the vessel through her projecting periscope. She then came to the surface, astern of the *Dunraven*, where no guns could be trained on her, and, for twenty minutes, proceeded to shell her before steaming past, and again examining her. Captain Campbell then decided to let off a torpedo at her, but this just missed. Apparently unobservant of this, the submarine then turned and steamed slowly down the other side, Captain Campbell loosing a second torpedo, also unhappily without result. This was seen by the enemy, who at once submerged again, Captain Campbell signalling for help; while, as a last resource, he disembarked yet a third "panic" party, leaving but one gun's crew aboard. Nothing more was heard from the enemy, however, and, in a few minutes, British and American destroyers were on the scene; the wounded were transferred; the fires were put out; and the *Dunraven* was taken in tow. Both Captain Campbell and Lieutenant-Commander Sanders received the Victoria Cross for their *Q* boat work—the latter being unfortunately lost, with his schooner the *Prize* a few months after the incident just related.

Now in all these measures, as in the surveillance of

shipping and the protection of Anglo-French traffic, the Dover Patrol necessarily played a commanding and indeed vital part. Upon it devolved the guarding of the southern of the two outlets by which alone the German submarines might escape into the Atlantic; and the difficulties were trebled by the enemy's possession of the West Flanders ports. With the geography and defences of these and their strategical significance we shall deal more particularly in the next chapter as with the splendid episode in which the Dover Patrol rendered them largely valueless to the enemy. But it must never be forgotten that, for nearly four years, the Dover Patrol carried on its work with the hostile ports of Zeebrugge and Ostend always within three hours' steaming. Darkness is the friend of the destroyer, daylight the friend of the submarine. Both were stationed at these enemy ports; and the strain upon the Dover command can thus be gauged. Further, it has to be remembered that through no other channel in the world passes so continual a procession of ships, how integral in the life of this country let a single incident suffice to show. In perhaps the darkest hour of the war, a serious proposal was made to the Government completely to seal the Straits of Dover for a certain defensive purpose. The proposal was examined, and it was then ascertained that, as regarded London alone, one of the following alternatives must immediately follow. Either it would have to be arranged, at a time when pressure upon our rolling-stock was at its severest, that no less than seventy-two additional trains should enter London daily, or that more than

three and a half millions of London's population should be removed to the Atlantic ports that it was proposed to use. The suggestion was thus found to be wholly impracticable, but its examination at least proved the immense responsibility resting upon the Dover Patrol and the officers in charge of it.

Established at the beginning of the war, the examination service in the Downs, therefore, continued without intermission to its end, the work being conducted by the Ramsgate Boarding Flotilla, largely manned by reservists and volunteers. From a hundred and twenty, diminishing, as the war proceeded, to eighty vessels a day were thus overhauled; and, almost every night, the Patrol was responsible for the safety of a hundred vessels here at anchorage. Nor did these duties exhaust the list, for to the Dover Patrol fell the additional task of supporting, day and night, the left flank of the British army. In a very real sense, indeed, it was itself not only the left flank of the British army, but of the whole of the Allied forces reaching from the Alps to the Belgian coast. Subject to continual attack not only from enemy surface-craft and the ever more efficient German submarines, but from daily and nightly excursions of hostile aeroplanes and airships, its own weapons of offence were largely novel and hitherto untried. The sea-going monitor was still, in most respects, an unfamiliar vessel; and the splendid qualities of these shallow-draught gun-platforms—some of which had just been completed for river work in Brazil—were as yet unrevealed when first



enlisted for their arduous duties upon the Belgian coast. When it is also recalled that under no other command, perhaps, was serving so large a proportion of amateurs, some idea becomes possible, not only of the peculiar functions of the Dover Patrol, but of the very deep debt owed by the nation to this sort of naval maid-of-all-work.

To Rear-Admiral the Hon. Horace A. L. Hood—afterward, as we have seen, to be lost in the Battle of Jutland—fell the responsible task, in the first days of war, of directing the activities of this composite force; and, in the great race toward the coast that followed the first battle of the Marne, a flotilla under his command was actively engaged in supporting the left wing of the Belgian army. It was during the last half of October, 1914, that the military position, as regarded the coast-line, was most critical; and it was during the night of October 17th that Admiral Hood, flying his flag in the old fleet-scout *Attentive*, anchored off Nieuport Pier with three monitors, the *Severn*, *Humber*, and *Mersey*, the light cruiser *Fore-sight*, and several destroyers.

Early next morning news was received that the German infantry was marching from Westende, and the flotilla moved up the coast to draw the fire from, and if possible to silence, the batteries that accompanied them. Almost immediately fire broke out from the shore, and this proved to be the beginning of a coastal campaign that continued without intermission for the next three weeks. For the defence of Nieuport some machine-guns from the monitor *Severn* were put ashore, and it was while in charge

of these that Lieutenant E. S. Wise, gallantly leading his men, was killed.

For the first few days, the enemy troops were trying to push along the coast roads in considerable force; a large amount of transport came under the naval guns; and much damage and destruction was caused by them. In view of this, the enemy soon changed his tactics, the infantry being withdrawn; while heavier guns were brought into action, compelling a response from the sea-forces. The lighter craft were therefore sent home to be replaced by H. M. S. *Venerable* and some old cruisers, while, at the same time, five French destroyers were placed by Admiral Favereau under Admiral Hood's command—the latter having the honour, as he put it (and it is tempting to wonder what would have been the comments upon this of the Hood who fought under Pitt) of flying his own flag in the French destroyer *Intrepide*.

During the later stages, persistent submarine-attacks were made upon the larger bombarding vessels, but these were thwarted, though not without casualties, by the alertness and dash of the destroyers. It was while thus guarding the *Venerable* that the destroyer *Falcon* came under a very heavy fire from the enemy's larger guns, and exhibited, in the persons of her officers and crew, the utmost coolness and devotion. Thus, under a hail of projectiles that eventually killed him, Lieutenant Wauton remained unmoved at his outlook for submarines. With the captain and twenty-four men killed and wounded, Sub-Lieutenant Du Boulay took command of the

ship. Finding himself the only unwounded man on deck, Able-Seaman Ernest Dimmock immediately went to the helm while Petty-Officer Robert Chappell, himself dying, and with both legs shattered, worked to the last, as best he could, tending his fellow wounded on board. Meanwhile on land, owing to the arrival of reinforcements and the skilful inundation of the flat country, the enemy's rush was finally checked, and the position more or less established early in November.

Such was the high standard set at the outset by the Dover Patrol; and, under Vice-Admiral Sir Reginald H. Bacon, who succeeded Rear-Admiral Hood in the following April, it was not only worthily sustained, but finally established beyond challenge—the development of Dunkirk as an additional offensive base, being one of the great achievements of the war. Thus, in spite of its ever more arduous and multitudinous duties—and it is interesting to remember that this was the command in which Nelson was the least successful and most ill at ease—it had been engaged, by the end of 1915, in no less than fourteen concerted actions. Knocke, Heyst, Zeebrugge, Ostend, Middlekerke, and Westende had been severally attacked; three military factories, two ammunition depots, storehouses, and signalling stations had been destroyed; considerable damage had been done to the wharves and the famous Mole at Zeebrugge; thirteen large guns had been put out of action; and a dredger, a torpedo-boat, and two submarines sunk.

During this time the only British losses were three vessels sunk; and their very names indicate the ex-

tent and variety of the marine resources that were to prove our salvation. The armed yacht *Sanda*, the pleasure steamer *Brighton Queen*, once so often thronged with cross-channel trippers, and the drifter *Great Heart*—these were the first casualties of the Dover Patrol. That they were so few was due in large measure to the vigilance and seamanship of three men, of Commodore C. D. Johnston in command of the Dover destroyers; of Captain F. G. Bird in charge of the drifters; and of Commander W. Rigg, who was chiefly responsible for the early organization of the mine-sweepers; while to Wing-Commander Longmore of the Dunkirk aerodrome must be assigned much of the credit for checking the enemy's aircraft. Had they not been supported, however, by the cheerful fidelity and amazing competence of their subordinates, they could have achieved but little as was generously recognized by Vice-Admiral Bacon in his first official despatch.

"Their Lordships will appreciate," he wrote, "the difficulties attendant on the cruising in company by day and night under war conditions of a fleet of eighty vessels comprising several widely different classes, manned partly by trained naval ratings, but more largely by officers of the naval reserve, whose fleet training has necessarily been scant, and by men whose work in life has hitherto been that of deep sea fishermen. The protection of such a moving fleet by the destroyers in waters which are the natural home of the enemy's submarines, has been admirable, and justifies the training and organization of the *personnel* of the flotilla. But more remarkable still,

in my opinion, is the aptitude shown by the officers and crews of the drifters and trawlers, which, in difficult waters, under conditions totally strange to them, have maintained their allotted stations without a single accident. Moreover, these men under fire have exhibited a coolness well worthy of the *personnel* of a service inured by discipline. The results show how deeply sea adaptability is ingrained in the seafaring race of these islands."

Those are words that, if they were true of the first sea-recruits of 1914, are equally, and, in some respects, more astonishingly applicable to the thousands that subsequently joined them from all ranks. Of these earlier candidates for sea service, none was more typical than Lieutenant-Commander H. T. Gartside Tipping, the oldest naval officer then afloat and one of the first to perish in the Narrow Seas. Having retired from the navy, with the rank of lieutenant, thirty-five years before the outbreak of war, Lieutenant-Commander Tipping had inherited a small estate, including a yacht, in the Isle of Wight. Here he had lived a quiet country life, ardently devoted to yacht racing; had kept himself alert and physically fit; and, at the age of sixty-six, having rejoined his old service and been given the rank of lieutenant-commander, had gladly and efficiently served under officers who might almost have been his grandsons.

To such a man as Lieutenant-Commander Tipping, however, the call of the sea may quite understandably have been imperative. Far less foretellable, and only to be explained, surely, by the racial instinct re-



ferred to by Admiral Bacon, was the later phenomenon of expert sailors quartering the seas in fast patrol-boats, who, but a year or two before, had been farmers or commercial travellers, or clerks behind counters in London shops. Christened in naval fashion by their professional brothers with various opprobrious nicknames, these were in reality but the affectionate symbols of the older navy's pride in its temporary junior partners; and the best measure of their work—necessarily undramatic, as all preventive work must largely be—is a survey of what the enemy was unable to accomplish in any representative period of the war. Let us take, for example, the six months before the Battle of Jutland, in its middle period. In that half year, through the Dover Patrol alone, there passed 21,000 merchant ships, and of these only 21 were lost or seriously damaged as the result of enemy action—little less than one in every thousand, entrusted to the case of this particular command. More remarkable still, perhaps, since these were inevitably, of course, the enemy's constant and most tempting target, not a single transport or one soldier's life was lost at sea during the same time.

Such had been the record, then, of the Dover Patrol up to the events described in the last chapter—events that, as we have shown, drove Germany's naval activity, for its main efforts, under the water, and confined it afloat to those tip-and-run raids of which that of the following February may be taken as typical. It was on Sunday night, February 25th, soon after eleven o'clock, that a number of star-shells suddenly broke in the sky over the Isle of Thanet, illuminating

the coast for a long distance and bringing many of its inhabitants to their windows. Almost simultaneously a brisk bombardment revealed the presence of a flotilla of German destroyers—Margate, Broadstairs, and a little hamlet between them, being subjected to the enemy's fire. Fortunately the casualties were few, and there was no military damage—none of the places attacked being fortified towns—but a woman and a child were killed and two children seriously wounded, and a dozen houses wrecked or injured. A single British destroyer pluckily engaged the enemy, who was soon lost to sight in the darkness, neither the British vessel nor any of the raiders suffering, as far as was known, any serious hurt.

For this enemy success, if such it can be called, and for one or two previous ones of a like nature, there was considerable criticism of the Dover Patrol, chiefly of an ignorant and hasty character. With the Germans at Zeebrugge and Ostend, and in favourable conditions of weather and darkness, it was obviously out of the question to give immutable guarantees against occasional excursions such as these; and that these brief and lawless bombardments reflected no lack of spirit on the part of the Patrol, the Dover destroyers *Swift* and *Broke* were soon triumphantly to demonstrate.

This was in the small hours of the dark morning of April 21, 1917, some of the German destroyers having crept into the Straits and shelled both Dover and Calais. In the case of the former town there were no casualties, but over a hundred shells were thrown into Calais, several people being killed, others

injured, and a good many houses being destroyed. Out on patrol and near mid-channel steaming westward, were the *Swift* and *Broke*, the *Swift* leading under Commander Ambrose Peck, and the *Broke* in charge of Commander E. R. Evans. Of the two vessels, soon to become immortal, the *Swift* was seven years the older, having been launched at Birkenhead in 1907 from the yards of Messrs. Cammel Laird. She had a displacement of 1,800 tons and carried four 4-inch guns. The *Broke*, on the other hand, had only just been completed before the outbreak of war, and, although approximately of the same dimensions, carried six 4-inch guns and three torpedo-tubes. By a remarkable coincidence, in view of what was to come, she bore the name of that Sir Philip Broke who commanded the *Shannon* during her historic duel in the spring of 1813, with the *Chesapeake*, when the latter was captured, after a most heroic resistance, during a hand-to-hand struggle on her deck. Commander Evans was, of course, the famous Polar explorer, who had been second-in-command to the ill-fated Captain Scott.

The sea was quite calm, but, in the black night, it was impossible to see more than half a mile ahead; and the enemy vessels were but six hundred yards distant when they were spotted by the destroyers' look-outs. Six in number, and including amongst them some of the fastest destroyers in the world, they were then on the port bow and travelling at high speed in an opposite direction to that of the *Swift* and *Broke*; and, almost simultaneously, they became aware of the presence of the two Britishers. Instantly they

sounded their fire-gongs, and, six to two, opened rapid fire. A minute before and the *Swift* and *Broke* had been respectable members of a gallant flotilla. Ten minutes later—such is the luck of the sea—and they had written their names forever in British naval history.

Wheeling round almost at right angles to her previous course, and in the face of the point-blank fire and dazzling flashes of the enemy's guns; with a target before her little more than 300 feet long and racing through the darkness at nearly thirty miles an hour; with the practical certainty, if she missed this, of being herself rammed by the next in the line; regardless of the odds, the *Swift* hurled herself at the first visible German destroyer. So instant had been the decision of the *Swift's* commander, that it might almost have been called automatic—the natural response not only of a lifetime's schooling, but of all the centuries behind this of British admiralty. Hit or miss, it was a sporting chance, the chance of a lifetime, and he took it. Alas, it was a miss, but such a narrow one that he himself cut through without disaster, swung round to port, torpedoed another of the six, and then picked up and chased a third.

Meanwhile the *Broke*, following the *Swift*, had put her helm over almost at the same moment; had successfully torpedoed one of the enemy line, literally plastering her with 4-inch shells; and was now making to ram another—possibly the one that the *Swift* had missed. This she did, splitting her at full speed, burying her bows in her and crushing her down; and there then ensued such a fight as had scarcely been

witnessed since the days of steam. With a gun out of action and part of her bridge already carried away before she had rammed; with her helmsman bleeding from several wounds but sticking to his wheel as long as he was conscious; with the remaining enemy destroyers pouring their shells into her, and German sailors swarming into her forecastle—the *Broke* raked her prey with everything that could be fired from a 4-inch gun to an automatic pistol.

By now, however, several Germans had gained their footing on deck, where Midshipman Gyles had been working the forward guns; and, for a few seconds, half blind with blood, and almost alone, he met the rush. Then a huge German seized his pistol-wrist and tried to wrench the weapon away from him, only to be struck at and thwarted by Petty-Officer Woodfield and finally cutlassed by Able Seaman Ingelson. With cutlasses and pistols the decks were then cleared, and a couple of hiding Germans made prisoners, and half a minute later the *Broke* freed herself from the German destroyer. With the *Swift* still chasing the enemy that she had marked down, and with two others put out of action, the *Broke* now turned her attention to the remainder and attempted to ram yet one more. In this she failed—she had been struck in the boiler-room and was becoming difficult to manœuvre—but loosed a torpedo at the destroyer nearest to her, and was successful in hitting her.

The enemy was now in full flight, but the disabled *Broke* succeeded in drawing level with one of the burning destroyers. Rapidly losing way, she never-



theless approached her at considerable risk to herself, the enemy, who had previously been shouting for help, suddenly and unexpectedly opening fire—an act of treachery that, as it proved, merely hastened his end. Four rounds silenced him, and a torpedo aimed amidships struck him fairly and settled his fate.

Meanwhile the *Swift*, herself partially disabled, had lost touch with the vanishing enemy, and, coming about, had sighted the destroyer rammed by the *Broke* and now on the verge of sinking. Here, too, the sailors on board were chorussing their desire to surrender; but, with natural suspicion, the *Swift* remained on guard, her guns trained on the sinking vessel. Presently this heeled over; the crew took to the water; and, as there seemed to be no other enemy vessel in sight, the *Swift* cautiously switched on her searchlights, lowered her boats, and began the work of rescue. At the same time the *Broke* began to signal to her—the whole fight had lasted barely five minutes—and the two crews were soon cheering each other, as well they might.

Both the destroyers sunk were four-funnelled vessels of the fastest and latest German type; two others had been crippled; and over a hundred men and officers taken prisoners. When the *Broke* rammed, as her helmsman had said, “I smiled for the first time during the action”—and that smile may be taken as representative not only of both ships’ companies but of the town of Dover on that April morning, when the two destroyers, saluted by everything in the harbour, modestly crept to their buoys.

Brilliant as this little action was, however, and typical both of the ineptitude with which the German destroyer-service was handled, and the prestige that the Dover Patrol had built up for itself during the war, it was but an incident of the ceaseless campaign, waged with almost every weapon in the Narrow Seas. Thus, while the coastal bombardments that had been so prominent a feature of the earlier months of the war were, for military reasons, deemed inadvisable during 1916 and 1917, an active blockade of the occupied Flanders area was maintained and vigorously pressed home.

Not only was the minefield that had been laid down when the North Sea was first closed continually added to, but other barrages were always being thought out and improved as necessity demanded. Thus, in 1916, twenty miles of nets had been laid parallel to the Belgian coast, and, in the winter of the same year, another had been constructed from the Goodwins to Dunkirk. This was somewhat difficult to keep in order, but the Belgian nets were renewed in 1917, and, in November and December of the same year, 4,000 mines were laid between Folkestone and Boulogne. These were of the latest type, and, with further additions, together with a system of flares and day and night patrols, developed into a barrier against which, in the end, the German submarines beat in vain—at least seventeen of these being certainly known to have fallen victims to its efficiency.

Second only in naval importance to the Grand Fleet, and in even more strenuous contact with the enemy, none had more cause, perhaps, to bless the

Dover Patrol, of whose unadvertised work this is but the barest outline, than those 2,000,000 soldiers, for whom, each year, it acted as crossing-sweeper, on their way home to England.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SEALING OF ZEEBRUGGE AND OSTEND

**M**ANIFOLD as were the duties, and various as was the composition of the Dover Patrol, it was in the sealing of Zeebrugge and Ostend—among the last naval operations of the war—that its qualities of enterprise, courage, and ingenuity found their most notable expression. How the possession of these places advantaged the enemy has already been indicated in the last chapter; and their continual threat to our communications was a sufficient justification of the proposed attempt. But it was not the only one, as a brief consideration of the general position will show. Robbed of these two ports, or with their usefulness so impaired as to render them abortive, the enemy would be thrown back, from the offensive standpoint, upon his Frisian estuaries, some three hundred miles distant; while the duties of the Patrol would be so sensibly lightened as to release an appreciable number of mosquito-craft. There would in fact be fewer exits to watch; these would be more distant by many hours' steaming; and there would at once be placed at our disposal more forces with which to watch them.

On the other hand, it was an enterprise as liable to complete disaster as any that could easily have been

imagined; and but little instruction and no great encouragement could be drawn from similar adventures in the past. Though scarcely comparable, perhaps, Nelson's expedition against Boulogne, while commanding in the Straits, had lamentably failed, resulting in the death of his close friend and valued subordinate, Captain Parker; while the sinking of blockships both by Lieutenant Hobson at Santiago in the Spanish-American War, and by the Japanese at Port Arthur in their campaign against Russia, had shown how innumerable were the possible mischances that could rob such efforts of success.

Nor had our own experiences, during the war, against land-fortifications, been very satisfactory; and both Zeebrugge and Ostend, and particularly the former, were, as was well known, armed to the teeth. On the other hand, neither was a natural harbour. Each had been carved, as it were, out of the sand; and, given but a chance, nature was always ready to obliterate the channels upon which they depended. Let us consider for a moment the problem that they presented to an Admiralty desirous of sealing them.

Situated on the Belgian coast, some twelve miles apart and facing a little to the west of north, each was in reality but a sea-gate of the inland port of Bruges—the latter being the station to which the enemy destroyers and submarines were sent in parts from the German workshops; where they were assembled; and whence, by canal, they proceeded to sea by way of Zeebrugge and Ostend. Of these two exits, Zeebrugge, the northernmost, was considerably the nearer to Bruges and the more important—Zeebrugge



being eight, while Ostend was eleven miles distant from their common base—and to receive an adequate impression of what was subsequently achieved there it is necessary to bear in mind its salient features.

Unlike Ostend, apart from its harbour, it possessed no civic importance, merely consisting of a few streets of houses clustering about its railway-station, locks, wharves, and store-houses, its sandy roadstead being guarded from the sea by an immensely powerful crescentic Mole. It was into this roadstead that the Bruges canal opened between heavy timbered breakwaters, having first passed through a sea-lock, some half a mile higher up. Between the two light-houses, each about twenty feet above high-water level, that stood upon the ends of these breakwaters, the canal was 200 yards wide, narrowing to a width, in the lock itself, of less than seventy feet.

Leading from the canal entrance to the tip of the Mole, on which stood a third light-house, and so out to sea, was a curved channel, about three-quarters of a mile long, kept clear by continual dredging; and this was protected both by a string of armed barges and by a system of nets on its shoreward side. It was in its great sea-wall, however, some eighty yards broad and more than a mile long, that Zeebrugge's chief strength resided; and this had been utilized, since the German occupation, to the utmost extent. Upon the seaward end of it, near the light-house, a battery of 6-inch guns had been mounted, other batteries and machine-guns being stationed at various points throughout its length. With a parapet along its outer side, some sixteen feet higher than the level

of the rest of the Mole, it not only carried a railway-line but contained a seaplane shed, and shelters for stores and *personnel*. It was connected with the shore by a light wood and steel viaduct—a pile-work structure, allowing for the passage of the through-current necessary to prevent silting.

Emplaced upon the shore, on either side of this, were further batteries of heavy guns; while, to the north of the canal entrance, and at a point almost opposite to the tip of the Mole, was the Goeben Fort containing yet other guns covering both the Mole and the harbour. Under the lee of the parapet were dug-outs for the defenders, while, under of the lee of the Mole itself was a similar shelter for the enemy's submarines and destroyers. Nor did this exhaust the harbour's defences, since it was further protected not only by minefields but by natural shoals, always difficult to navigate, and infinitely more so in the absence of beacons.

Even to a greater extent was this last feature true of Ostend, though here the whole problem was somewhat simpler, there being no Mole, and therefore no necessity—though equally no opportunity—for a subsidiary attack. Covered, of course, from the shore by guns of all calibres—and here it should be remembered that there were 225 of these between Nieuport and the Dutch frontier—the single object in this case was to gain the entrance, before the lock-ships should be discovered by the enemy, and sunk by his gunners where their presence would no do harm. Since for complete success, however, it was necessary to seal both places, and, if possible, to do so simultaneously,

it will readily be seen that, in the words of Sir Eric Geddes—the successor, as First Lord of the Admiralty, to Mr. Balfour and Sir Edward Carson—it was “a particularly intricate operation which had to be worked strictly to time-table.” It was also one that, for several months before, required the most arduous and secret toil.

Begun in 1917 while Sir John Jellicoe was still First Sea Lord, the plan ultimately adopted—there had been several previous ones, dropped for military reasons—was devised by Vice-Admiral Roger Keyes, then head of the Plans Division at the Admiralty. From the first it was realized of course, by all concerned that the element of surprise would be the determining factor; and it was therefore decided that the attempt to block the harbours should take place at night. It was also clear that, under modern conditions of star-shells and searchlights, an extensive use would have to be made of the recent art of throwing out smoke-screens; and fortunately, in Commander Brock, Admiral Keyes had at his disposal just the man to supply this need. A Wing-Commander in the Royal Naval Air Service, in private life Commander Brock was a partner in a well-known firm of fire-work makers; and his inventive ability had already been fruitful in more than one direction. A first-rate pilot and excellent shot, Commander Brock was a typical English sportsman; and his subsequent death during the operations, for whose success he had been so largely responsible, was a loss of the gravest description both to the navy and the empire.

The next consideration was the choosing of the block-ships, and for these the following vessels were at last selected—the *Sirius* and *Brilliant* to be sunk at Ostend, and the *Thetis*, *Iphigenia*, and *Intrepid* to seal the canal entrance at Zeebrugge. These were all old cruisers, and they were to be filled with cement, which when submerged would turn into concrete, fuses being so placed that they could be sunk by explosion as soon as they had reached the desired position; and it was arranged that motor-launches should accompany them in order to rescue their crews. Unfortunately Lieutenant Ivan B. Franks, who was responsible for the block-ships, was laid aside, the day before the event, by an attack of appendicitis, and, at his urgent request, his duties were undertaken by his friend, Lieutenant Billyard-Leake—a very able young officer, then barely twenty-two years of age.

So far these general arrangements were applicable to both places; but, as regarded Zeebrugge, it was decided to make a diversion in the shape of a subsidiary attack on the Mole, in which men were to be landed and to do as much damage as possible. Such an attack, it was thought, would help to draw the enemy's attention from the main effort, which was to be the sinking of the block-ships, and, apart from this, would have valuable results both material and moral. For this secondary operation, three other vessels were especially selected and fitted out—two Liverpool ferry-boats, the *Iris* and *Daffodil*, obtained by Captain Grant, not without some difficulty, owing to the natural reluctance of the Liverpool authorities

and the impossibility of divulging the object for which they were wanted—and the old cruiser *Vindictive*. This latter vessel had been designed as a “ram” ship more than twenty years before, displacing about 5,000 tons and capable of a speed of some twenty knots. She had no armour-belt, but her bow was covered with plates two inches thick and extending fourteen feet aft, while her deck was also protected by hardened plates, covered with nickel steel, from a half to two inches thick. Originally undergunned, she had subsequently been provided with ten 6-inch guns and eight 12-pounders.

This was the vessel chosen to convey the bulk of the landing-party, and, for many weeks, under the supervision of Commander E. O. B. S. Osborne, the carpenters and engineers were hard at work upon her. An additional high deck, carrying thirteen brows or gangways, was fitted upon her port side; pom-poms and machine-guns were placed in her fighting-top; and she was provided with three howitzers and some Stokes mortars. A special flame-throwing cabin, fitted with speaking tubes, was built beside the bridge, and another on the port quarter.

It was thus to be the task of the *Vindictive* and her consorts to lay themselves alongside the Mole, land storming and demolition-parties, and protect these by a barrage as they advanced down the Mole; and, in order to make this attack more effective, yet a third operation was designed. This was to cut off the Mole from the mainland, thus isolating its defenders and preventing the arrival of reinforcements; and, in order to do so, it was decided to blow up the viaduct



by means of an old submarine charged with high explosives. Meanwhile, the whole attempt was to be supported from out at sea by a continuous bombardment from a squadron of monitors; seaplanes and aeroplanes, weather permitting, were to render further assistance; and flotillas of destroyers were to shepherd the whole force and to hold the flanks against possible attack.

This then was the plan of campaign, one of the most daring ever conceived, and all the more so in face of the difficulty of keeping it concealed from the enemy during the long period of preparation—a difficulty enhanced in that it was not only necessary to inform each man of his particular rôle, but of the particular objectives of each attack and the general outline of the whole scheme. That was unavoidable since it was more than likely that, during any one of the component actions, every officer might be killed or wounded and the men themselves become responsible. Nor was it possible, even approximately, to fix a date for the enterprise, since this could only be carried out under particular conditions of wind and weather. Thus the night must be dark and the sea calm; the arrival on the other side must be at high water; and there must above all things be a following wind, since, without this, the smoke-screens would be useless. Twice, when all was ready, these conditions seemed to have come, and twice, after a start had been made, the expedition had to return; and it was not until April 22, 1918, that the final embarkation took place.

By this time Vice-Admiral Keyes had succeeded

Vice-Admiral Bacon in command of the Dover Patrol; and he was therefore in personal charge of the great adventure that he had initiated and planned with such care. Every man under him was not only a volunteer fully aware of what he was about to face, but a picked man, selected and judged by as high a standard, perhaps, as the world could have provided. Flying his own flag on the destroyer *Warwick*, Admiral Keyes had entrusted the *Vindictive* to Acting Captain A. F. B. Carpenter, the *Iris* and the *Daffodil* being in the hands respectively of Commander Valentine Gibbs and Lieutenant Harold Campbell. The Marines, consisting of three companies of the Royal Marine Light Infantry and a hundred men of the Royal Marine Artillery, had been drawn from the Grand Fleet, the Chatham, Portsmouth, and Devonport Depots, and were commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Bertram Elliot. The three block-ships that were to be sunk at Zeebrugge, the *Thetis*, *Intrepid*, and *Iphigenia*, were in charge of Commander Ralph S. Sneyd, Lieutenant Stuart Bonham-Carter, and Lieutenant E. W. Billyard-Leake; while the old submarine *C3* that was to blow up the viaduct was commanded by Lieutenant R. D. Sandford. In control of the motor-launches allotted to the attack on Zeebrugge, was Admiral Keyes' flag-captain, Captain R. Collins, those at Ostend being directed by Commander Hamilton Benn, M.P.—the operations at the latter place being in charge of Commodore Hubert Lynes. Also acting in support was a large body of coastal motor-boats under Lieutenant A. E. P. Wellman, and a flotilla of destroyers under Captain Wil-

fred Tomkinson, the general surveying of the whole field of attack—including the fixing of targets and firing-points—being in the skilful hands of Commander H. P. Douglas and Lieutenant-Commander F. E. B. Haselfoot.

Included among the monitors were the *Erebus* and *Terror*, each mounting 15-inch guns, to operate at Zeebrugge; and the *Prince Eugene*, *General Crauford*, and *Lord Clive*, carrying 12-inch guns, and the *Marshal Soult*, carrying 15-inch guns, to assist at Ostend. To the old *Vindictive* Admiral Keyes had presented a horse-shoe that had been nailed for luck to her centre funnel; and, to the whole fleet, on its way across, he signalled the message, "St. George for England." Few who received that message expected to return unscathed, and in the block-ships none; but it is safe to say that, in the words of Nelson, they would not have been elsewhere that night for thousands.

Such then were the forces that, on this still dark night, safely arrived at their first rendezvous and then parted on their perilous ways, some to Zeebrugge and some to Ostend. It was at a point about fifteen miles from the Belgian coast that the two parties separated; and, since it is impossible to follow them both at once, let us confine ourselves at first to the former. Theirs was the more complicated, though, as it afterward proved, the more swiftly achieved task, the first to arrive on the scene of action, almost at the stroke of midnight, being the old cruiser *Vindictive* with her two stout little attendants. These she had been towing as far as the rendezvous; but, at this point, she had cast them off, and they were now

following her, under their own steam, to assist in berthing her and to land their own parties. Ahead of them the small craft had been laying their smoke-screens, the northeast wind rolling these shoreward, while already the monitors could be heard at work bombarding the coast defences with their big guns. Accustomed as he was to such visitations, this had not aroused in the enemy any particular alarm; and it was not until the *Vindictive* and the two ferry-boats were within 400 yards of the Mole that the off-shore wind caused the smoke-screen to lift somewhat and left them exposed to the enemy. By this time the Marines and bluejackets, ready to spring ashore, were mustered on the lower and main decks; while Colonel Elliot, Major Cordner, and Captain Chater, who were to lead the Marines, and Captain Halahan, who was in charge of the bluejackets, were waiting on the high false deck.

It was a crucial moment, for there could be no mistaking now what was the *Vindictive's* intention. The enemy's star-shells, soaring into the sky, broke into a baleful and crimson light; while his search-lights, that had been wavering through the darkness, instantly sprang together and fastened upon the three vessels. This, as Captain Carpenter afterward confessed, induced "an extraordinarily naked feeling," and then, from every gun that could be brought to bear, both from the Mole and the coast, there burst upon her such a fire as, given another few minutes, must inevitably have sunk her. Beneath it Colonel Elliot, Major Cordner, and Captain Halahan, all fell slain; while Captain Carpenter himself had the narrowest escape from destruction. His cap—he had

left his best one at home—was two or three times over pierced by bullets, as was the case of his binoculars, slung by straps over his back; while, during the further course of the action, both his searchlight and smoke-goggles were smashed.

The surprise had so far succeeded, however, that, within less than five minutes, the *Vindictive's* bow was against the side of the Mole, and all but her upper works consequently protected from the severest of the enemy's fire. Safe—or comparatively so—as regarded her water-line, she was nevertheless still a point-blank target; her funnels were riddled over and over again, the one carrying the horse-shoe suffering least; the signal-room was smashed and the bridge blown to pieces, just as Commander Carpenter entered the flame-throwing cabin; and this in its turn, drawing the enemy's fire, was soon twisted and splintered in all directions. It was now raining; explosion followed explosion till the whole air quaked as if in torment; and meanwhile a new and unforeseen danger had just made itself apparent. Till the harbour was approached, the sea had been calm, but now a ground-swell was causing a "scend" against the Mole, adding tenfold not only to the difficulties of landing, but of maintaining the *Vindictive* at her berth. In this emergency, it was the little *Daffodil* that rose to and saved the situation. Her primary duty, although she carried a landing-party, had been to push the *Vindictive* in until the latter had been secured; but, as matters were, she had to hold her against the Mole throughout the whole hour and a quarter of her stay there. Even so, the improvised



gangways that had been thrust out from the false deck were now some four feet up in the air and now crashing down from the top of the parapet; and it was across these brows, splintering under their feet, and in face of a fire that baffled description, that the Marines and bluejackets had to scramble ashore with their Lewis guns, hand-grenades, and bayonets.

Under such conditions, once a man fell, there was but little hope of his regaining his feet; and it was only a lucky chance that saved one of the officers from being thus trodden to death. This was Lieutenant H. T. C. Walker, who, with an arm blown away, had stumbled and fallen on the upper deck, the eager storming parties sweeping over him until he was happily discovered and dragged free. Let it be said at once that Lieutenant Walker bore no malice, and waved them good luck with his remaining arm. The command of the Marines had now devolved upon Major Weller; and, of the 300 or so who followed him ashore, more than half were soon to be casualties. But the landing was made good; the awkward drop from the parapet was successfully negotiated thanks to the special scaling-ladders; the barrage was put down; and they were soon at hand-to-hand grips with such of the German defenders as stayed to face them. Many of these were in the dug-outs under the parapets, but, seeing that to remain there was only to be bayoneted, they made a rush for some of their own destroyers that were hugging the lee of the Mole. But few reached these, however, thanks to the vigour of the Marines, and the fire of the machine-guns from the *Vindictive's* top, while one of the destroyers was

damaged by hand-grenades and by shells lobbed over the Mole from the *Vindictive's* mortars.

Meanwhile the *Vindictive* was still the object of a fire that was rapidly dismantling all of her that was visible. A shell in her fighting-top killed every man at the guns there except Sergeant Finch of the Royal Marine Artillery, who was badly wounded, but who extricated himself from a pile of corpses, and worked his gun for a while single-handed. Another shell, bursting forward, put the whole of a howitzer crew out of action, and yet a third, finding the same place, destroyed the crew that followed.

Fierce as was the ordeal through which the *Vindictive* was passing, however, that of the *Iris* was even more so. Unprotected, as was her fellow the *Daffodil*, boring against the side of the larger *Vindictive*, the *Iris*, with her landing-party, was trying to make good her berth lower down the Mole, ahead of Captain Carpenter. Unfortunately the grapnels with which she had been provided proved to be ineffective owing to the "scend"; and, with the little boat tossing up and down, and under the fiercest fire, two of the officers, Lieutenant-Commander Bradford and Lieutenant Hawkins, climbed ashore to try and make them fast. Both were killed before they succeeded, toppling into the water between the Mole and the ship, while, a little later, a couple of shells burst aboard with disastrous results. One of these, piercing the deck, exploded among a party of Marines, waiting for the gangways to be thrust out, killing forty-nine and wounding seven; while another, wrecking the ward-room, killed four officers and twenty-six men. Her

captain, Commander Gibbs, had both his legs blown away, and died in a few hours, the *Iris* having been forced meanwhile to change her position, and take up another astern of the *Vindictive*.

Before this happened, however, every man aboard her, as aboard the *Vindictive*, *Daffodil*, and upon the Mole, had been thrilled to the bone by the gigantic explosion that had blown up the viaduct lower down. With a deafening roar and a gush of flame leaping up hundreds of yards into the night, Lieutenant Sandford had told them the good tidings of his success with the old submarine. Creeping toward the viaduct, with his little crew on deck, he had made straight for an aperture between the steel-covered piles, and to the blank amazement and apparent paralysis of the Germans crowded upon the viaduct, had rammed in the submarine up to her conning-tower before lighting the fuse that was to start the explosion.

Before himself doing this, he had put off a boat, his men needing no orders to tumble into her, followed by their commander, as soon as the fuse was fired, with the one idea of getting away as far as possible. As luck would have it, the boat's propeller fouled, and they had to rely for safety upon two oars only, pulling, as Lieutenant Sandford afterward described it, as hard as men ever pulled before. Raked by machine-gun fire and with shells plunging all round them, most of them, including Lieutenant Sandford, were wounded; but they were finally borne to safety by an attendant picket-boat under his brother Lieutenant-Commander F. Sandford.

That had taken place about fifteen minutes after

the *Vindictive* and her consorts had reached their berths, and a few minutes before the block-ships, with *Thetis* leading, had rounded the light-house at the tip of the Mole. In order to assist these to find their bearings, an employee of Commander Brock, who had never before been to sea, had for some time been firing rockets from the after cabin of the *Vindictive*; and presently they came in sight, exposed, as the *Vindictive* had been, by the partial blowing-back of their smoke-screen. Steaming straight ahead for their objectives, they were therefore opposed by the intensest fire; and the spirit in which they proceeded is well illustrated by what had just taken place on board the *Intrepid*. It had been previously arranged that, for the final stage of their journey, the crews of the block-ships should be reduced to a minimum; but, when the moment came to disembark the extra men, those on the *Intrepid*, so anxious were they to remain, actually hid themselves away. Many of them did in fact succeed in remaining, and sailed with their comrades into the canal.

The first to draw the enemy's fire, the *Thetis*, had the misfortune, having cleared the armed barges, to foul the nests—bursting through the gate and carrying this with her, but with her propellers gathering in the meshes and rendering her helpless. Heavily shelled, she was soon in a sinking condition, and Commander Sneyd was obliged to blow her charges, but not before he had given the line, with the most deliberate coolness, to the two following block-ships—Lieutenant Littleton, in a motor-launch, then rescuing the crew.

Following the *Thetis* came the *Intrepid*, with all her guns in full action, and Lieutenant Bonham-Carter pushed her right into the canal up to a point actually behind some of the German batteries. Here he ran her nose into the western bank, ordered his crew away, and blew her up, the engineer remaining down below in order to be able to report results. These being satisfactory, and everyone having left, Lieutenant Bonham-Carter committed himself to a Carley float—a kind of lifebuoy that, on contact with the water, automatically ignited a calcium flare. Illumined by this, the *Intrepid's* commander found himself the target of a machine-gun on the bank, and, but for the smoke still pouring from the *Intrepid*, he would probably have been killed before the launch could rescue him.

Meanwhile, the *Iphigenia*, close behind, had been equally successful under more difficult conditions. With the *Intrepid's* smoke blowing back upon her, she had found it exceedingly hard to keep her course, and had rammed a dredger with a barge moored to it, pushing the latter before her when she broke free. Lieutenant Billyard-Leake, however, was able to reach his objective—the eastern bank of the canal entrance—and here he sank her in good position, with her engines still working to keep her in place. Both vessels were thus left lying well across the canal, as aeroplane photographs afterward confirmed; and thanks to the persistent courage of Lieutenant Percy Dean, the crews of both block-ships were safely removed.

With the accompanying motor-launch unhappily



sunk as she was going in, Lieutenant Dean, under fire from all sides, often at a range of but a few feet, embarked in *Motor-Launch* 282 no less than 101 officers and men. He then started for home, but, learning that there was an officer still in the water, at once returned and rescued him, three men being shot at his side as he handled his little vessel. Making a second start, just as he cleared the canal entrance, his steering-gear broke down; and he had to manœuvre by means of his engines, hugging the side of the Mole to keep out of range of the guns. Reaching the harbour mouth he then, by a stroke of luck, found himself alongside the destroyer *Warwick*, who was thus able to take on board and complete the rescue of the block-ships' crews.

It was now nearly one o'clock on the morning of the 23d; the main objects of the attack had been secured; and Captain Carpenter, watching the course of events, decided that it was time to recall his landing-parties. It had been arranged to do so with the *Vindictive's* syren, but this, like so much of her gear, was no longer serviceable; and it was necessary to have recourse to the *Daffodil's* little hooter, so feebly opposed to the roar of the guns. Throughout the whole operation, humble as her part had been, the *Daffodil* had been performing yeoman's service, and, but for the fine seamanship of Lieutenant Harold Campbell, and the efforts of her engine-room staff, it would have been quite impossible to re-embark the Marines and bluejackets from the Mole. In the normal way her boilers developed some 80-lbs. steam-pressure per inch; but, for the work of holding the

*Vindictive* against the side of the Mole, it was necessary throughout to maintain double this pressure. All picked men, under Artificer-Engineer Sutton, the stokers held to their task in the ablest fashion; and, in ignorance of what was happening all about them, and to the muffled accompaniment of bursting shells, they worked themselves out, stripped to their vests and trousers, to the last point of exhaustion.

Nor did their colleagues on board the *Vindictive* fall in any degree short of the same high standard, as becomes clear from the account afterward given by one of her stokers, Alfred Dingle: "My pigeon," he said, "was in the boiler-room of the *Vindictive*, which left with the other craft at two o'clock on Tuesday afternoon. We were in charge of Chief Artificer-Engineer Campbell, who was formerly a merchant-service engineer and must have been specially selected for the job. He is a splendid fellow. At the start he told us what we were in for, and that before we had finished we should have to feed the fires like mad. 'This ship was built at Chatham twenty years ago,' he said, 'and her speed is 19 knots, but if you don't get 21 knots out of her when it is wanted, well—it's up to you to do it anyway.' We cheered, and he told us, when we got the order, to get at it for all we were worth and take no notice of anybody. We were all strong fellows, the whole thirteen of us. . . . The *Vindictive* was got to Zeebrugge; it was just before midnight when we got alongside the Mole. We had gas-masks on then, and were stoking furiously all the time, with the artificer-engineer backing us up, and joking and keeping us in the best of spirits. No-

body could have been down-hearted while he was there. There is no need to say it was awful; you know something from the accounts in the papers, although no written accounts could make you understand what it was really like. . . . Well, there we were, bump, bump, bump against the Mole for I don't know how long, and all the time shells shrieking and crashing, rockets going up, and a din that was too awful for words, added to which were the cries and shrieks of wounded officers and men. . . . Several times Captain Carpenter came below and told us how things were going on. That was splendid of him, I think. He was full of enthusiasm, and cheered us up wonderfully. He was the same with the seamen and men on deck. . . . I can't help admiring the Marines. They were a splendid lot of chaps, most of them seasoned men, whilst the blue-jackets (who were just as good) were generally quite young men. The Marines were bursting to get at the fight and were chafing under the delay all the time. . . . While we were alongside I was stoking and took off my gas-mask, as it was so much in the way. It was a silly thing to do, but I couldn't get on with the work with it on. Suddenly I smelt gas. I don't know whether it came from an ordinary shell, but I knew it was not from the smoke-screen, and you ought to have seen me nip round for the helmet. I forgot where I put it for the moment, and there was I running round with my hand clapped on my mouth till I found it. In the boiler-room our exciting time was after the worst was over on shore. All of a sudden the telegraph rang down, 'Full speed

ahead,' and then there was a commotion. The artificer-engineer shouted, 'Now for it; don't forget what you have to do—21 knots, if she never does it again.' In a minute or two the engines were going full pelt. Somebody came down and said we were still hitched on to the Mole, but Campbell said he didn't care if we towed the Mole back with us; nothing was going to stop him. As a matter of fact, we pulled away great chunks of the masonry with the grappling irons, and brought some of it back with us. Eventually we got clear of the Mole, and there was terrific firing up above. Mr. Campbell was urging us on all the time, and we were shoving in the coal like madmen. We were all singing. One of the chaps started with, 'I want to go home,' and this eventually developed into a verse, and I don't think we stopped singing it for three and a half hours—pretty nearly all the time we were coming back. In the other parts of the ship there wasn't much singing, for all the killed and wounded men we could get hold of had been brought on board, and were being attended to by the doctors and sick bay men. I don't know if we did the 21 knots, but we got jolly near it, and everybody worked like a Trojan, and was quite exhausted when it was all over. When we were off Dover the Engineer-Commander came down into the boiler-room and asked Artificer-Engineer Campbell, 'What have you got to say about your men?' He replied, 'I'm not going to say anything for them or anything against them, but if I was going to hell to-morrow night I would have the same men with me.'"

Not until the Mole had been cleared of every man

that could possibly be removed did the *Vindictive* break away, turning in a half-circle and belching flames from every pore of her broken funnels. That was perhaps her worst moment, for now she was exposed to every angry and awakened battery; her lower decks were already a shambles; and many of her navigating staff were killed or helpless. But her luck held; the enemy's shells fell short; and soon she was comparatively safe in the undispersed smoke-trails, with the glorious consciousness that she had indeed earned the admiral's "Well done, *Vindictive*."

Six Victoria Crosses were allotted to those participating, of whom there was scarcely one that had not doubly earned the honour; and four of these were handed over to be assigned as the officers and men themselves decided. Acting Captain (soon to be confirmed as Captain) A. F. B. Carpenter, Sergeant Finch of the *Vindictive's* fighting-top, Captain Bamford of the Royal Marines, and Able Seaman Albert E. McKenzie were thus chosen; while Lieutenants Percy Dean and R. D. Sandford were also awarded the same honour, Vice-Admiral Roger Keyes being made a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath.

Meanwhile at Ostend an equal gallantry had unluckily failed to succeed, two main factors, at the last moment, contributing to baffle the block-ships. The chief of these was the shifting by the enemy, three days before the attack, of the Stroom Bank Buoy—this bank being one of a series that had to be negotiated before entering the harbour; and the other being a change of wind to the south-southwest, blowing back the smoke-screens and exposing the



attack. Here, owing to the confusion caused by the displaced buoy, this change of wind had far more serious results, the calcium flares that had been lit by the coastal motor-boats, behind the smoke-screens, being extinguished by the enemy's gunfire; while the *Sirius*, repeatedly hit, was soon in a sinking condition. Having taken a line by the Stroom Bank Buoy—now more than 2,000 yards east of its former position—both the *Sirius* and *Brilliant* went ashore, where there was no alternative but to sink them, their crews being rescued in motor-launches by Lieutenants Hoare and Bourke.

With the attack on Zeebrugge so triumphant a success, however, it was the unanimous opinion of all concerned that the failure at Ostend could not be allowed to stand; and, almost before she had been berthed beside Dover Pier, a new task was found for the *Vindictive*. She had done well. She had done very well. But the Dover Patrol had an exigent standard. To the thoughtful eye, what more convenient vessel for a second operation at Ostend? Nor were there any lack of volunteers, all the officers of the *Sirius* and *Brilliant* again coming forward; while Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Bury of the *Vindictive*, with four of the engine-room artificers, H. Cavanagh, N. Carroll, A. Thomas, and H. Harris, all pressed their claims upon Admiral Keyes, in view of their special knowledge, to remain with the vessel.

Finally it was decided that Commander Godsal, who had been in charge of the *Brilliant*, should, for the further attempt, command the *Vindictive*, a second block-ship, the *Sappho*, being placed in charge

of Lieutenant-Commander Hardy, who had previously commanded the *Sirius*. As before also, Commander Hamilton Benn was given the charge of the motor-launches, Lieutenant E. C. Harrison being entrusted with the coastal motor-boats; while the whole operation, though Sir Roger Keyes was again to be present in the destroyer *Warwick*, was once more placed in the able hands of Commodore Hubert Lynes.

That the Germans would on this occasion be amply prepared was, of course, humanly certain; and aerial observation soon revealed that they had already taken fresh precautions. The Stroom Bank Buoy had been removed altogether, leaving no guiding marks of any sort, while the piers had been cut in various places to limit the activities of possible landing-parties. It was quite clear, therefore, that to attempt a second surprise a change of plan would be necessary; and it was decided to attack on the first suitable night without the previous lengthy bombardment. Not until the *Vindictive* was close to her objective were the monitors at sea to open fire, the ends of the two piers having first been torpedoed by coastal motor-boats under cover of a smoke-screen. That having been accomplished, the airmen overhead were to drop star-shells and begin releasing their bombs, while the heavy guns of the Flanders shore batteries were to open simultaneously from the land. Every possible misadventure was foreseen and provided for as well as all conceivable changes of wind; and each stage of the operation was timed with the exactitude of an express train's journey on a main line. It was well that it was so; for, as before, just

at the critical moment, the conditions changed, and, for twenty minutes or more, in spite of everything, the adventure trembled on the brink of failure.

Timed to reach Ostend in the early hours, it was on the night of May 9th that the two block-ships set out, the weather then promising, as it had promised on April 22d, all that was required in the way of support. It was a moonless night with a still sea and a faint wind blowing from the right quarter, all of them conspiring to help the little craft that were already racing ahead upon their various tasks. That some enemy destroyers were out was believed to be probable; but, in the event, only one was encountered, this being driven off by Lieutenant Wellman in a little coastal motor-boat armed with a Lewis machine-gun. Unhappily, the *Sappho*, owing to boiler trouble, was unable to maintain her speed; and, to the bitter disappointment of all on board, was forced to come to anchor twelve miles from Ostend. For the rest, however, all went well; there were as yet no signs of enemy suspicion; and, behind their advanced columns of lazily rolling smoke, the destroyers and motor-boats were soon at work. One lay a light-buoy to guide the *Vindictive*; another hung a flare in the rigging of the wrecked *Sirius*; while a third lit a calcium flare in the rightful position of the Stroom Bank Buoy. Four minutes before the *Vindictive*, having picked up the life-buoy, reached this last, another couple of motor-boats—one commanded by Lieutenant Darrel Reid and the other by Lieutenant A. L. Poland—made a dash for the two pier-heads and successfully torpedoed them.

Up to this moment the enemy had been silent; but now, as from sea and land the heavy guns opened upon him, his batteries suddenly awoke and filled the air with the screaming and explosions of his shells. To these were added the peculiar dull intonations of the bombs dropped on him from above; while his searchlights hurriedly sprang to attention, and star-shell after star-shell broke into light. From the attackers' point of view nothing could have happened more fortunately; but now, by one of those sea-whims that nothing could have foretold, a sudden fog descended upon the scene and threatened to baulk the whole plan. As though they had been blinded by some perverse agent, the destroyers and motor-boats found themselves in darkness, hidden from each other, as they were hidden from the *Vindictive*, and with their flares and searchlights unavailing.

Striving to keep in touch by means of their syrens, they did their best to maintain their stations, but meanwhile the *Vindictive*, left without guides, could only grope about in search of the entrance. The feelings of Commander Godsall, with the failure of the *Sirius* and *Brilliant* still fresh in his mind, can well be imagined; and, as the minutes passed by, each with its quota of unredeemable opportunity, it may well have seemed to him that the fates had made up their minds that he was not to be the man to block Ostend.

So twenty minutes passed, and then, with a gesture as apparently whimsical as the first, the fog abruptly lifted and revealed the entrance between the two piers just in front of him. At the same moment Acting Lieutenant G. L. Cockburn, with his attendant

motor-boats, darted ahead, and marked it with a flare; and the *Vindictive*, steaming across this, found herself safe in the desired channel. That is scarcely the right word, perhaps, for now, within less than three weeks, she had again become the target of scores of the enemy's guns. Hit every few seconds, a shell destroyed her after-control, killing Sub-Lieutenant MacLachlan and all its occupants; while every exposed position on the deck was swept, as from a hose, with machine-gun bullets.

Commander Godsall, therefore, ordered his officers into the conning-tower, leaving it himself, however, when 200 yards up the channel, to be killed by a shell just as the *Vindictive* was beginning to swing herself into position. It was this same shell that struck the conning-tower, stunning Lieutenant Sir John Alleyne, who was inside, Lieutenant V. A. C. Crutchley taking command of the vessel on getting no reply from his commander. Having swung her round to an angle of between thirty and forty degrees, however, it became impossible to move her further, and Lieutenant Crutchley ordered the ship to be abandoned, he himself and Lieutenant-Commander Bury then blowing the charges that were to sink her.

Meanwhile the crew, many of whom were wounded, were being disembarked into a motor-launch, most gallantly laid alongside by Lieutenant G. H. Drummond. This officer, who remained on the bridge till the last man had been taken off, had already been wounded in three places, and had lost an officer and a man of his crew. The last to leave the *Vindictive* was Lieutenant Crutchley after searching in every



quarter with an electric torch; and, when Lieutenant Drummond, having backed his launch away, collapsed and fainted from his wounds, he took charge of the little vessel which was already seriously damaged. Crowded with wounded, and with her fore part flooded, it was only by continual baling with buckets, and by shifting as many men aft as possible, that he was able to keep her afloat, finally bringing her alongside the destroyer *Warwick* in a sinking condition.

An even narrower escape was that of Lieutenant Alleyne, whom we have last seen lying unconscious in the conning-tower, but who was presently found there by Petty-Officer Reed, who carried him aft under the heaviest fire. Before he could be got overboard, Lieutenant Alleyne was badly hit, and fell into the water, presumably lost. Following Lieutenant Drummond, however, Lieutenant Bourke had come into the harbour with a second motor-launch; and, when Lieutenant Drummond backed away, Lieutenant Bourke had come alongside. Finding the *Vindictive* empty, he too was about to back out when he heard cries from the water, and found Lieutenant Alleyne, with two other men, all of them badly wounded, clinging to an upturned skiff. Under the bitterest fire—his little motor-launch was hit in fifty-five places, and once by a 4-inch shell—Lieutenant Bourke succeeded in rescuing them and bringing his launch out into the open again, where he presently sighted one of the bombarding monitors, by whom he was at last taken in tow. For the parts which they played on this occasion, Lieutenants Crutchley, Drummond, and Bourke each received the Victoria Cross.

Such was the conclusion, just as day was breaking, of three unique operations, in that almost every branch of modern science had been laid under contribution for their carrying out. The chemist, the engineer, the pyrotechnician—each had been indispensable to the final success, and yet in no undertakings of the naval campaign had the human factor more palpably triumphed.

Drawn from the Grand Fleet, with Admiral Beatty's warm support, from the forces at Harwick and the Dover Patrol, from the three Home Depots, the Royal Marine Light Infantry, and the Royal Marine Artillery, the volunteers had also included representatives of the Australian and French navies; while the Admiralty experimental stations at Stratford and Dover had contributed eager participants. As to the material results, in the case of Zeebrugge, these alone had been well worth attaining. More than a score of torpedo-craft and a dozen submarines were at once, and for many days afterward, immobilized; while the enemy's naval activities, dependent on this port, remained seriously hampered till the end of the war. As regarded Ostend, while the material results were not very great, this was also the less important harbour, and the moral effect of the two attacks was both immediate and profound. Up to the very eve, indeed, of the great retirement, so nervous of future operations did the enemy remain, that two of his divisions were pinned to the coast in view of possible developments, while money and material were poured like water into the further strengthening of its defences.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE COMING OF THE AMERICANS

These were the stars that they followed,  
Eastward returning,  
The stars of the old sailors  
Steadily burning.  
Fearlessness, loyalty, liberty,  
These and none others  
Shone in the eyes that they turned to us,  
Eyes of our brothers.

**A**MONG the minor casualties of the war was the disappearance of newspaper contents bills; and it was chalked upon a paving-stone in Holborn, as doubtless upon other paving-stones elsewhere, that a little group of people read the most momentous tidings that had reached London since the days of Elizabeth. That to a certain extent they were not unexpected; that since the *Lusitania* went down they had perhaps been inevitable—the three words, scribbled by the newspaper vendor, *America Declares War*, were none the less thrilling. All that lay dormant in them had not yet been revealed; but, even at the time, they were sufficiently overwhelming. For they not only meant that a great people, recruited from almost every nation on earth, had spoken its final and unanimous endorsement of all that Britain and her Allies were shedding their blood

for; they not only meant that America had come into the ring on the side of chivalry and clean fighting; but they meant the reconciling, with its infinite implications, of two great branches of one family, each with liberty at the very core of every movement of its policy, and both inheritors of the common tongue of Shakespeare, Milton, and Bunyan.

Of the progressive steps by which the American nation moved from a position of neutrality to one of intervention, this is not the place to give the history. Deeply, and most understandably, reluctant to interfere in the affairs of Europe, it was not until he had judged that the people as a whole—no less on the prairies of Dakota than in the parlours of Boston—had realized the issue as supra-European, did President Wilson voice the great decision. With an extraordinary patience, severely criticized not only abroad but at home, he had refused to allow any incident, however provocative, to become the *casus belli* for the United States until the essential evil, of which it was but a symptom, was recognized and repudiated beyond the last doubt; and, although diplomatic relations were broken off in February, on Germany's declaration of unrestricted submarine murder, it was not until April 6, 1917, that war was finally declared.

During that time American lives had been lost in the sinking of the *Laconia*, *Vigilancia*, *Healdton*, and *Aztec*; while there was made public the German intrigue with Mexico in which she had promised the latter the states of Texas and Arizona. It was with this in mind, no doubt, that President Wilson, on April 3d, spoke as follows: "Self-governed nations

do not fill their neighbours' states with spies, or set the course of intrigue to bring about some critical position of affairs which will give them an opportunity to strike and make conquests. Such designs can be successfully worked out only under cover, and where no one has the right to ask questions. Cunningly contrived plans of deception or aggression, carried, it may be from generation to generation, can be worked out and kept from the light only within the privacy of courts, or behind the carefully guarded conferences of a narrow and privileged class. They are happily impossible where public opinion demands and insists upon full information concerning all the nation's affairs." As regarded the submarine campaign, he said, "Vessels of every kind, whatever their flags, their character, their cargo, their destination, their errand, have been ruthlessly sent to the bottom without warning and without a thought of help or mercy for those on board—the vessels of friendly neutrals along with those of belligerents. Even hospital ships and ships carrying relief to the sorely bereaved and stricken people of Belgium, though the latter were provided with safe-conducts through the prescribed areas by the German Government itself, and were distinguished by unmistakable marks of identity, have been sunk with the same reckless lack of compassion or principle." Proclaiming it to be America's duty to take up such a challenge, he finished his address to Congress in memorable words. "To such a task," he said, "we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know



that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other."

Such was America's entrance, with a gesture worthy of her, and in which none more than Britain might take a greater pride; and it would be quite impossible to overestimate the immediate moral value of her action. Though it was, of course, clear that, not for many months, could her full weight be felt in Europe, there had been placed at the disposal of the Entente's anxious statesmen not only the unplumbed resources of another continent, but a new spring of unjaded enthusiasm at a peculiarly troubled stage of the war. Of the subsequent growth of the American armies, of their historic rush over the Atlantic in the following spring, and of the self-abnegation with which, at a critical moment, they allowed themselves to be brigaded with the British and French forces, we may not write here, save in so far as their navy and ours made this possible. Here we must confine ourselves to a brief survey of the American effort at sea, prefacing all that follows with the reminder that, no less than ourselves, the United States' navy shared in the great traditions bequeathed by the Elizabethan admirals.

To such as were familiar with its inner life, that had indeed long been manifest; and we have already referred to a couple of incidents in which it had become apparent to the world at large. In the fight of the *Chesapeake* against the *Shannon*, wherein both

victor and vanquished shared an equal glory, and, in the action of Lieutenant Hobson at Santiago, its true lineage had shone out; while no English-speaking sailor of modern times had gloried in it more eloquently than Admiral Mahan. At the same time, separated by thousands of miles, on either side, from any potential foe; self-dependent, owing to its vast inner resources, for almost every material of industry; and with but few colonies, scattered over the world, whose interests required protection, America's attitude toward naval expansion had necessarily been somewhat different from our own. It had seemed rather an adjunct to her great natural defences than the vital condition of her existence; and the reflection of this had been clearly visible in her recent programmes of construction. Thus in 1909, 1910, and 1911 only two new battleships had been authorized each year. In 1912 and 1913 this number had been reduced to one; while, in 1914, though three had been authorized, two second-class battleships had been sold to Greece.

In that year, however, the naval staff had issued a rather disquieting report; and, in the three years that followed, very considerable strides were made in the direction of strengthening the Fleet. Always admirable in *personnel*, and with a considerable maritime population upon which to draw, fresh attention was paid to her reserves, which, on her entrance into the war, were organized in four classes; and, in the strictly offensive sense, it was at sea that her help as a combatant was the soonest felt. Weakest in cruisers, and entirely lacking in high-speed, heavy-gunned

battle-cruisers, she possessed fourteen battleships of the dreadnought type with another score of the second and third classes. Of her dreadnoughts six—the *Pennsylvania*, *Arizona*, *Oklahoma*, *Nevada*, *New York*, and *Texas*—mounted 14-inch guns, the first two carrying twelve of these, with a secondary armament of twenty-two 5-inch guns, and the last four carrying ten, with a secondary armament of twenty-one 5-inch guns respectively. Five other battleships were still in course of construction on her entrance into the war. She had also nearly a hundred destroyers and torpedo-boats, and something over sixty submarines, and was soon to be producing fast sub-chasers, as she called them, in very large numbers. Manned, as all these were, by a *personnel* not only eager and intelligent, but combining a nationally typical self-confidence with the modesty and discipline of true seamen, the American navy was thus a timely reinforcement of the most valuable kind; and it was made doubly so by the prompt generosity with which it lent itself to the existing commands.

Nothing else, indeed, was to have been expected, since the relations between the British and American navies had always been a little in advance, perhaps, as regarded cordiality, of those prevailing between their respective countries. Even when they were opponents in the war that should never have been, they had sincerely and consistently respected each other; and, for the last hundred years, whenever they had foregathered, it had been with a more than formal friendliness. "It has been a rule," wrote the doyen of American admirals, the late Admiral Dewey, in

1913, "that wherever a British and an American ship meet, their officers and their crews fraternize. The two services speak the same language, they have a common inheritance of naval discipline and customs. Exchanges of visits, which are ceremonial where other nations are concerned, become friendly calls in a congenial atmosphere."

Nor had more solid evidence been lacking of the genuine alliance of which both navies were conscious. Thus in 1859, when the *Toey-Wan*, a British chartered steamer, in the Pei River, was enduring an extremely heavy fire from the Chinese forts, the American flag-officer, Josiah Tatnall, who was present on the occasion, turned to a junior officer and exclaimed, "Blood is thicker than water," ordered his boat to be manned, and, with his own crew, took the place of the fallen British gunners. Later, when Admiral Dewey himself, while blockading Manila, during the Spanish-American War, was in serious difficulties owing to the attitude of the German admiral present in the Bay, it was the action of Captain Chichester, the senior British officer, in upholding Admiral Dewey's position under international law, that prevented the development of an awkward and potentially serious situation.

Divided into three main commands—the Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Asiatic, each in charge of a full admiral, the only other full admiral in the American navy was the Chief of the Naval Staff at Washington. This officer, roughly corresponding with our own First Sea Lord, was in charge of all operations, the Secretary of the Navy, corresponding with our First Lord,

being a civilian official of Cabinet rank. Of the three sea commands, the Atlantic was considerably the most important, and contained the chief proportion of the latest and most powerful vessels of the American navy. This command was held, during the American intervention, by a distinguished officer, Admiral Mayo, the naval administration at Washington being in the able hands of Admiral Benson, while to the command of all American naval forces operating in European waters was appointed Vice-Admiral W. S. Sims.

Born in Canada, formerly a naval attaché in London, and distinguished, throughout his career, by a remarkable combination of vision, initiative, and mastery of detail, Vice-Admiral Sims (later to become Admiral on the retirement of the admiral of the Asiatic Fleet) was the obvious choice for a position requiring very rare and special abilities. A close friend and admirer, in earlier days, of the British gunnery expert, Sir Percy Scott, Admiral Sims had been largely responsible for wide-spreading reforms in American gunnery methods—reforms carried through, not without opposition, by his characteristic tact and driving force. Always ready, at first hand, to examine the ideas of his most junior officers, invariably loyal to them, and caring nothing for personal dignity so that the war might be won in the speediest fashion, it was little wonder not only that he was idolized by all who served under him, but that his British colleagues could have asked for no more able or inspiring a helper.

Beginning in April, 1917, with five officers and a



room or two, the United States Naval Headquarters in London had expanded, by the end of the war, to a total *personnel* of 912 occupying several large houses—notwithstanding that, during the whole time, Admiral Sims himself had scarcely missed a single attendance at the usual daily conference at the British Admiralty. Under him at sea, and at the various subsidiary bases, with which we shall presently deal more particularly, there were serving by November, 1918, nearly 5,000 officers and 76,000 men. Not until it is remembered that these fifteen bases were scattered between Queenstown in Ireland and Corfu in Greece, between Inverness in the North of Scotland and Bizerta near Algiers; that everyone of them had to be created while the war was in active progress, and that simultaneously, both in Europe and America, thousands of untrained men and officers had to be educated—can some idea be formed of the administrative miracle expressed in the full contribution of American sea-power.

Declaring war in April, 1917, America's first naval units to appear in European waters were the destroyers that arrived in May to operate from Queenstown in the south of Ireland. Perhaps the most valuable of all, they arrived at a peculiarly appropriate moment. The submarine warfare was then at its most destructive stage; the British destroyer crews, at the end of their third winter, were beginning to show signs of staleness; while, owing to the demands upon them in every quarter and especially by the Grand Fleet, it had so far been impossible fully to develop the convoy-system of merchant shipping

later so successful. The arrival of these destroyers, therefore, was trebly welcome; and they placed themselves, without reservation, at the British Admiral's disposal. Reporting immediately upon arrival to Vice-Admiral Lewis Bayly, he enquired how soon they would be ready for duty. "As soon as we have re-fueled, sir," replied the Senior American Officer; and that remained the keynote of all their activities. By the end of June, twenty American destroyers were regularly at work in the Queenstown area; and, by the end of the war, though they were still under the British Admiralty, there were none but American destroyers at this base.

Throughout that time, the bulk of their work consisted of escorting convoys; and the relief caused by their presence was felt almost immediately. It was in the Irish Sea, the Bristol Channel, and off the west coast of Ireland that our shipping losses had been heaviest; and our overworked destroyers had been obliged to fight the submarines by means of constant patrols in very broad areas. That had proved insufficient, as our losses clearly showed; and it was the American reinforcements that enabled us to turn the tide. The regular organization of convoys was at once put in hand, and the submarine sinkings began to decrease.

Proceeding westward, it was the task of the American destroyers to pick up these merchant-vessels or troopships, escort them through the danger-zone to the mouth of the Irish Sea or the off-shore patrols of the Bristol Channel, hand them over to the waiting British destroyers, and then, returning westward

again, repeat the process; while, a little later, other detachments performed similar duties between Liverpool and Milford Haven. How well they worked let a figure or two show.

Actually at sea seven days out of every ten, they steamed, during the war, more than 2,000,000 miles. Of the total traffic passing through this area, they were responsible for sixty-five per cent.; while, whenever three or four days were likely to elapse between the arrival or departure of convoys, they at once took their part in the usual patrol-duties and submarine-hunting always in progress. Of the total number of nearly 2,000,000 American troops transported to Europe in 1918, sixty-two per cent. were escorted by American destroyers, more than 800,000 being carried in American ships. Such vessels as the great liners *Aquitania*, *Olympic*, *Mauretania*, and *Leviathan* were always brought to and fro under their guardianship, and none of them was lost; while, as to the coöperative spirit that produced these amazing results, let the remarks of a junior American destroyer-officer bear witness. "Old Admiral Bayly," he was heard to observe, "is a fine old gentleman for work. His policy is that, as long as there is a war on, there is no necessity for waiting around looking for something to do. He certainly has given us a hard time of it, but, because of his efficiency, insight, and powers of organization, everyone has appreciated the privilege of working under him." Needless to say, Admiral Bayly's feelings for his American command were equally warm.

Meanwhile at Brest in France a new American base

was quickly growing. Already, in June, 1917, a few vessels had been sent there—converted yachts that were at once employed as escorts to coastal convoys through the Bay of Biscay. By October it was realized, however, that this must inevitably become one of the chief American naval stations in Europe; and the erection of barracks, hospitals, and repair-shops, on the largest scale, was at once begun. Early in the new year, many new vessels were sent there; and, by June, 1918, the complement had increased from sixteen yachts to thirty-four destroyers, four repair-ships, three supply-ships, and nine mine-sweepers.

Here, as at Queenstown, the main task was one of escort duty; and the American forces quickly became responsible for the safety of ninety per cent. of all the traffic along the French coast and in the Bay of Biscay. In the first three months of 1918, fifty-four convoys of 186 ships were thus escorted by the American destroyer-flotillas; while, in the third three months, these figures had increased to ninety-eight convoys of 742 ships. During July and August, 1918, these forces escorted no less than 3,500,000 tons of shipping—the entire French coast having been practically placed under the command of the American Rear-Admiral H. B. Wilson.

Almost contemporary with the development at Brest had been that of the American naval forces based upon Gibraltar. Here, on August 18, 1917, had arrived the U. S. S. *Birmingham*, then the flagship of Rear-Admiral Wilson and a scout-cruiser of the United States Atlantic Fleet. With her had come

the *Sacramento*, and, in less than four days, this vessel was at sea again escorting an English convoy—the American naval officers, just as at Queenstown, acting under the orders of the British Admiral. By the following March, twenty-eight American vessels were regularly operating from Gibraltar, and, by June, there were thirty-five, with another forty based upon Corfu—those at Gibraltar, under Rear-Admiral Niblack, acting as an integral part of the British forces and being entirely at the disposal of the British admiral in command.

Here also, as at Brest, the vessels were very various, consisting of cruisers, destroyers, and gun-boats, with a number of yachts, converted into warships, and some coast-guard cutters. Of these the larger vessels were continually on escort duty between the Mediterranean and England as also between the Continent and the chief South American ports. They furnished a quarter of the total escorts for local Mediterranean convoys, and more than seventy per cent. of the escorts for ocean and deep-sea merchantmen. To the smaller vessels were allotted patrol-duties at the mouth of the Mediterranean, local convoy work, and convoy work with vessels bound to and from the Azores. Far less sea-worthy than the larger vessels, and, as regarded the yachts, not intended for war-service, theirs were, perhaps, the hardest tasks of all and as little dramatic as those of the others. Precisely in the same spirit, however, of cheerful grumbling as that of their sea-loving British brethren, the officers and men of these heterogeneous vessels set themselves to compass their various tasks.



"Our ships," wrote one of them, referring to the five mine-sweepers under his particular command, "are the old Jersey fishermen's boats, re-rigged a bit and *thrown* together for this duty. When they outfitted these boats, they put all the stuff in a big gun and shot it at the hull. Then they loaded a machine-gun with nails and bolts, and shot that load after the first; and lo, out of chaos, we have sweepers. Our motto is 'Always ready' and 'We do anything.' And we do. We sweep, patrol, salvage wrecks, tug-boat, convoy sometimes, despatch duty, and if the coal isn't prompt, we get a rest. Day into night, night into day, and vice versa, sometimes normal, mostly not, that's our life—but we are all happy and well and working for the same cause. . . . All of the officers except three are Reserve officers, and a corking fine lot they are. I admire the spirit that brings them with us, and give them a lot of credit. Theirs has been a hard lot, and they have done well. . . . Meatless, wheatless, cheerless, heatless, foodless, and fruitless days are in our scheme of things economic, and sometimes there is evidence of brainless days with me. . . . You remember the old Rules of the Road for passing vessels? We have a new one to rival Farragut's famous 'Damn the torpedoes—go ahead.' Ours is modest:

Red to red and green to green,  
To hell with danger—steam between.

Sweeping for mines is not like anything you see in a hotel or office or home—no, sir—it is entirely different. The broom is a big wire, and the game is look-

ing for a needle in a haystack. It is a great sport in a way. I guess, if you analyze it seriously, it's the biggest game in this war from a naval point of view—a field is located, and instead of carefully avoiding it, we make the most exhaustive calculations to get right into it. . . . You have hunted big game in the mountains, but you could see what you were shooting at. We look for big game without that advantage. Get the idea? We don't want to throw ourselves any bouquets, but those who think that the submarine is the only menace, and destroyers the only duty, don't know what it means to hunt for the horned egg. . . . Every mine we get means a ship saved, each ship and cargo is worth at least three million dollars, and each mine we sink or explode cuts down the overhead. I am proud of my ships, my officers, and my men. We came across, and we are doing all we can to make good. . . . I have never met the King and Queen, so don't feel blue if they don't ask about me." To any one in doubt of the essential kinship between the average lieutenants of the English-speaking navies, we would beg to suggest a careful perusal of the foregoing letter.

Equally characteristic, and modestly illustrative of the spirit in which these American escort-officers interpreted their duty, is the following account, written by the commander of the destroyer *Warrington*, of the attempt to save the *Wellington*, a British collier. "The *Wellington*," he wrote, "carrying coal to Gibraltar, left Milford Haven with a convoy of about twenty ships in the morning of Friday, September 13th. Sunday night the escort of British destroyers

left, and convoy proceeded under ocean escort of U. S. S. *Seneca*. About eleven in the morning of September 16th, the *Wellington* sighted a submarine which porpoised and instantly thereafter submerged about one point on her starboard bow. Immediately afterward she was struck by a torpedo forward, and the forehold was quickly flooded. The *Wellington's* crew of forty-four abandoned the ship in the two good lifeboats belonging to her, and were picked up by U. S. S. *Seneca*, the ocean escort.

First Lieutenant Fletcher W. Brown, Coast Guard, attached to *Seneca*, asked and obtained the permission of his commanding officer to man the *Wellington* with a volunteer crew and endeavour to bring her into port. A large number of the *Seneca's* crew volunteered, and eighteen men were chosen. At the same time the Master of the *Wellington*, the first and second mates and ten of her original crew volunteered to return with the *Seneca's* men. They were permitted to do so, and all went aboard the *Wellington*, with Lieutenant Brown in charge, but the Master of the *Wellington* navigating. Unfortunately, before returning to the *Wellington*, one of the lifeboats which had been used when the ship was first abandoned had been cast adrift. This left the vessel with but one lifeboat, two jolly boats, and two life-rafts which Lieutenant Brown had made on board.

At the time the *Wellington's* S. O. S. was received, the *Warrington* was operating with a west-bound convoy about eighty miles to the southward of the S. O. S.; but it was not before eleven p. m. that the *Warrington* was detached by the escort commander,

and ordered to proceed to the position of the torpedoed ship. This order was carried out with all possible speed, but the *Wellington* had meanwhile been making about 7 knots per hour, heading for Brest, but steering badly on account of her being down by the head. Finally radio-communication was established between the *Wellington* and the *Warrington*, and a systematic search instituted by the latter vessel. Between eleven P. M., the sixteenth, and one A. M., the seventeenth, two eleven P. M. positions were received from *Wellington* differing by about forty miles. This discrepancy is explained by the first mate who states that the Master got a fix by simultaneous star sights about 11.30 and sent out a corrected position, which was forty miles away from his dead reckoning. I headed the *Warrington* toward the new position, and at three A. M. picked up *Wellington* dead ahead.

In the meanwhile we had received a radio from her saying she had stopped, but would go ahead again when wind had moderated. Just as we picked her up, the moon set. There was a strong breeze from the southwest and the sea was rough. I exchanged signals with *Wellington* and she stated that there was every probability of her remaining afloat till daylight and possibly longer, as her volunteer crew had then kept her afloat for seventeen hours. However, shortly after this signal was received, a bulkhead collapsed and she signalled for immediate assistance, and said her crew were abandoning ship. Immediately afterward I picked up her lifeboat containing first and second mates of *Wellington*, five of her orig-

inal crew, and one of the *Seneca's* volunteer crew. I searched for more boats, coming as close to *Wellington* as I dared in the darkness. Going alongside in that wind and sea would have been suicide. I tried to hold *Wellington's* lifeboat alongside, but it quickly swamped and I had to cut it adrift.

Meanwhile, a desperate attempt was made to lower one of our boats, but after two men had barely escaped serious injuries in the attempt, I saw it would be a case of just so many more men in the water. The current was against the sea, so I went to leeward of *Wellington* and floated down three life-rafts well lighted, my Franklin life-buoys, and a number of circular buoys, all with lights. I learned afterward that *Wellington's* remaining boats were small and that they had been smashed in lowering, and that for some reason their own life-rafts had fouled and could not be gotten clear of the ship. Accordingly all the remaining men went down with the ship, or jumped just before she sank.

It was still very black, the proverbial darkest hour just before the dawn. From a few hundred yards to leeward I watched the black hull turn turtle, slowly settle in the water, and then disappear from sight. It was very distressing not to be able to do anything at that moment for the men in the water. Our life-rafts and buoys were there, with plenty of calcium torches, but we absolutely could not get a boat in the water. I circled slowly well clear of the raft. When dawn broke finally, we began to see men in the water. Some were on our rafts and buoys, some on pieces of floating wreckage. All were singing out



to attract our attention. In picking them up, I had, of course, to take the ship alongside the men and to get heaving lines to them. In doing this, as you may well imagine, we had to draw a fine line between cutting the man down and getting close enough to get a heaving line to him. Manœuvring amidst the wreckage, life-rafts, and buoys, we finally picked up eight men out of the water. One of these died on board. We had been able to save only half of the entire crew, but careful search for four hours failed to locate any more survivors.

One of the first men picked up from the water proved to be Lieutenant Brown, who had been in command of the volunteer crew. A heaving line had been flung to him, and he had grabbed it, but he says he does not remember having been hauled on board. He apparently lost consciousness until he awoke in a bunk in the C. P. O.'s quarters, when his identity was discovered. There were several commendable incidents on the part of our crew. I have recommended for life-saving medals three of my own crew—William James Taylor, coxswain; Robert Emanuel Noel, quartermaster, first class; Walter Irving Sherwood, fireman, first class—all for having jumped from the *Warrington* into the heavy sea, with lines made fast to their waists, in attempting to save life. Especially courageous was the action of Seaman James Osborne of the Coast Guard, one of the survivors. Osborne, supporting a shipmate—Coxswain John A. Peterson—swam to a small life-raft and placed Peterson, who was in a semi-conscious condition, on the raft, holding him, as well as he could, between his

feet. Several times both Osborne and his shipmate were washed off the raft by the high seas, whereupon Osborne went to Peterson's assistance and replaced him on the raft. Finally, while I was going to the assistance of another man, who seemed for the time being in a more desperate predicament than Osborne, the latter semaphored from his pitching raft, 'I am all right; but he's gone unless you come right away.' We got them both. Above all, young Brown of the Coast Guard deserves commendation. It was he who organized the volunteer crew that kept the *Wellington* afloat for seventeen hours, and, without a doubt, with even average weather conditions, would have saved her."

While American cruisers, destroyers, gun-boats, coast-guard cutters, and tenders were thus all represented in European waters by the autumn of 1917, the first appearance of America's battleships was not till December 6th, when four of these were assigned to the Grand Fleet. Commanded by Rear-Admiral Hugh Rodman, and forming the Sixth Battle Squadron under Sir David Beatty, they consisted of the *New York*, *Florida*, *Wyoming*, and *Delaware*, the *Texas* joining in February, and the *Arkansas* relieving the *Delaware* in the following July. Here their duties, with the Battle of Jutland already an eighteen-month-old event, were but those of every similar squadron attached to the Grand Fleet—to take their share in filling the North Sea, to watch night and day for the tarrying High Seas Fleet, and to remain, throughout all that time, keyed to the highest pitch of preparedness and efficiency.

The *Florida*, *Delaware*, *New York*, and *Texas* were all, at different times, the subject of torpedo-attack; and the *New York* was successful in putting down a submarine in October, 1918. With other units of the Grand Fleet they undertook their appropriate share of convoy-work between the North of Scotland and the Norwegian coast. Finally, during the night of November 20, 1918, they proceeded to sea with the Grand Fleet, and had the satisfaction of being present at the arrival for internment of the German High Seas Fleet.

As we have seen, it was during the last quarter of 1917 that these battleships made their appearance; and, during these same three months, some American submarines first came into action and began regular patrols. Five of these, with the tender *Tonopah*, were based upon Ponte Delgada in the Azores; and, later, another seven arrived in Bantry Bay, and were soon operating from Berehaven. Though they were only successful, by indirect action, in accounting for one hostile submarine, their work of hampering the enemy's activities was of the most valuable nature, and, by the spring of 1918, they had become responsible for the whole area sentinelled from Berehaven.

To the work of the mine-sweepers we have already referred, and, in the summer of 1918, these were joined by the mine-layers, work being begun by these upon the Northern Barrage on June 8th. Thirteen excursions were made, the fourteenth being held up owing to the signing of the armistice; and, during these trips, more than 56,000 mines were laid at a cost of more than £9,000,000.

Nor must the navy's aid to the American army coal trade go without mention in these pages. Early in the autumn of 1917, the army coal situation in France became serious, and the navy was asked, in order to avoid a crisis, to send some colliers to the rescue. Accordingly, between the 5th of October and the 1st of December, 1917, navy colliers made thirty trips between Cardiff and the French ports, during which time they carried for the army 96,000 tons of coal. Later it was decided to place the whole of the army coal trade under the supervision of the navy; a base was established at Cardiff, under Rear-Admiral Philip Andrews, and, by the end of the war, there were fifty-five colliers in actual commission for this purpose.

Meanwhile, in America, as in England, though its activities were being curtailed, there had been no disposition to underestimate the serious nature of the submarine menace, and new methods of defeating it were being constantly thought out. Perhaps the most notable of these was the construction and large-scale employment of sub-chasers, the first of these coming into use during the early summer of 1918. These were 110-foot gasoline boats, each of them displacing eighty tons, and each carrying a 3-inch, a Y gun (for throwing depth-charges to a distance), and a dozen depth-charges. Each was manned by a crew of two officers and twenty-three men; and each was equipped with the very latest and best of American listening devices. They were thus able to detect submerged submarines up to a very considerable distance, and were particularly effective at night, when

they drifted noiselessly, with their listening devices manned. By day they patrolled, stopping at intervals to listen; took their share of the ordinary convoy-work; assisted torpedoed vessels to reach port; and destroyed drifting mines.

By the first of July, 1918, there were more than seventy of these at work, and, by the end of the war, a hundred and twenty. Thirty-six of them were based on Corfu, and formed part of the barrage across the Straits of Otranto. Another detachment operated from Plymouth and a third from Queenstown; while the closing days of the war saw a fourth working from Gibraltar. Hunting as a rule in threes, the following account, selected at random from many of a like nature, will illustrate best, perhaps, with its official brevity, the sort of work performed by these American chasers. It relates the story, not of a red-letter day, but of a few exciting minutes, spent by three Queenstown sub-chasers on an October afternoon in 1918.

"Sub-chasers 47, 48, and 208, while on running patrol, made contact with submarine at 14.30. After four runs of various courses and distances, made position fix at 15.30, course 25 mag., distance 400 yards. Made attack in line formation 47 dropping six charges, 208 dropping five, and 48 dropping one charge. Stopped and listened; submarine heard by all three boats sounding badly damaged and within 200 yards of 48. As the other two chasers were not in position to make an attack together without losing time, 48 attacked, dropping two depth-charges. Stopped and listened. Submarine heard by all boats,



sounded as if having trouble with her engines, and was hammering. Positive fix directly ahead of 47 who instantly attacked with two depth-charges. Stopped and listened. Submarine heard by 47 in direction of 208. 208 heard, but could not centre sound. A few seconds later, 208 and 47 got a fix just astern of the 208, which attacked as fast as she could turn and get under way, dropping two stern depth-charges. The first charge of this attack did not explode, although charge was properly set. The 208 reported an oil slick where last charge exploded. On investigation this was found to be merely disturbances caused by the explosion of the depth-charge. While the 208 was investigating this disturbance, several members of her crew saw what appeared to be the wake of a submarine on her port beam, but did not bring it to the attention of the commanding officer in time to make an attack. Stopped and listened. Positive fix by all three chasers within 200 yards of the 208, which immediately attacked with two stern charges and Y gun. First stern charge failed to explode. Chasers re-formed in original chase formation and got fix distance 400 yards. As 208 had only one charge left, she remained behind in case submarine should come to the surface. 47 and 48 attacked, each dropping two depth-charges. First charge dropped by 48 failed to explode. Stopped and listened. No definite fixes were obtained, but all chasers heard submarine running with apparent difficulty at about 310°. Ran a thousand yards and listened. Sound of submarine lost at 1,800. From then on disturbance due to wireless communication

and the arrival of two destroyers, one trawler, two motor-launches, and the passing of a convoy, made it impossible to again pick up submarine." Such was an encounter, typical of many, and all invaluable as police-work, even though they failed, as did this one, in sinking or capturing the prey.

Luckier were the chasers engaged at Durazzo, during the British and Italian bombardment, when this important Albanian harbour was rendered untenable as an enemy base. Setting out at noon on October 2, 1918, the sub-chasers, eleven in number, under the command of Captain C. P. Nelson, met the British and Italian squadrons at the appointed rendezvous. As they neared the coast, the whole force came under a very heavy fire from the enemy batteries; but the sub-chasers, by skilful zig-zagging, and keeping well inside the range of the guns, succeeded in carrying out their task without a single casualty.

Hardly had they pierced the barrage, however, before the periscope of a hostile submarine made its appearance; and, considering that the majority of the crews of the sub-chasers had never before been under fire, the coolness and decision of their tactics could hardly have been excelled. With her second shot Chaser 215 smashed the enemy's periscope, and then, in company with Chaser 128, steered at full speed for the spot where the submarine had gone under. Dropping their depth-charges, they were immediately rewarded by the coming to the surface of a large piece of steel plating followed by a great spout of heavy black oil, in the midst of which the plate sank again. A moment later Chaser 129 sighted

another submarine about to attack the larger vessels. Twice it submerged, changing its course, but, in spite of engine trouble, the sub-chaser followed her, dropping three depth-charges, and, like her colleagues, receiving the best evidence of success. Seven large pieces of steel plating rose to the surface in the whirl, followed by a steady stream of black oil, proving that the depth-charges had done their work.

Having broken up the submarine-attack, a little later, they were once again of most timely service. At the entrance of the harbour, Chaser 130 sighted two floating mines. One of these she destroyed by gunfire, and the other she rendered harmless, just as a detachment of British destroyers was bearing down upon it at thirty knots. In this attack on Durazzo, every enemy boat in the harbour was either sunk or disabled; and no better example could be cited of America's naval coöperation.

Nor did this end upon the water, and, necessarily brief as this review must be, it must still be remembered that it extended both to land and air. With a *personnel* of thirty officers and 486 men, her Naval Railway Battery rendered very important assistance. With the first shipment arriving at St. Nazaire on July 25, 1918, all these heavy guns were mounted and ready in a little more than three weeks, and were in full action against the enemy throughout September and October. Laon, Longuyon, and Montmedy were the main objectives against which they were employed, 193 rounds being fired at the first of these, 119 at the second, and no less than 295 at what was one of the key positions behind the German retreat.

Finally, in turning from a record of service not to be estimated in many volumes, and with America's sonship of admiralty already, as we may hope, amply proved, let us finish this chapter with the following report of a young American naval ensign, working with a patrol of British seaplanes over the waters of the North Sea. "On June 4th," he said, "we received orders to carry out a reconnaissance and hostile aircraft patrol over the North Sea and along the coast of Holland. It was a perfect day for such work, for the visibility was extremely good, with a light wind of 15 knots and clouds at the high altitude of about eight or ten thousand feet. Our three machines at Felixstowe rose from the water at twelve o'clock, circled into patrol formation, and proceeded northeast by north along the coast to Yarmouth. Here we were joined by two more planes but not without some trouble and slight delay because of a broken petrol pipe which was subsequently repaired in the air. We again circled in formation, Captain Leckie, D. S. O., of Yarmouth, taking his position as leader of the squadron.

"At one o'clock the squadron proceeded east; our machine, being in the first division, flew at 1,500 feet, and at about half a mile in the rear of Captain Leckie's machine, but keeping him on our starboard quarter. We sighted nothing at all until half-past two, when the Haaks Light Vessel slowly rose on the horizon, but near this mark and considerably more to the south we discovered a large fleet of Dutch fishing smacks. This fleet consisted of more than a hundred smacks. Ten minutes later we sighted the

Dutch coast where we changed our course more to the northeast. We followed the sandy beaches of the Islands of Texel and Vlieland until we came to Terschelling. In following the coast of Vlieland we were close enough to distinguish houses on the inside of the Island and even to make out breakers rolling up on the sandy beach.

“At Terschelling we proceeded west in accordance with our orders, but soon had to turn back because of Captain Leckie’s machine which had fallen out of formation and come to the water. This machine landed at 3.15 and we continued to circle around it, finding that the trouble was with a broken petrol pipe, until about fifteen minutes later, when we sighted five German planes steering west, a direction which would soon bring them upon us. At this time Captain Barker had the wheel; Lieutenant Galvayne was seated beside him, but if we met the opposing forces he was to kneel on the seat with his eyes above the cowl, where he could see all the enemy planes and direct the pilot in which direction to proceed. I was in the front cockpit with one gun and 400 rounds of ammunition. In the stern cockpit, the engineer and wireless ratings were to handle three guns. We at once took battle formation and went forward to meet the enemy, but here we were considerably surprised to find that, when we were nearly within range, they had turned and were running away from us. At once we gave chase, but soon found that they were much too fast for us. Our machine had broken out of the formation and with nose down had crept slightly ahead of Captain Leckie, and we, being the



nearest machine to the enemy, I had the satisfaction of trying out my gun for a number of rounds. It was quite impossible to tell whether I had registered any shots or not. Our purpose in chasing these planes was to keep them away from the machine on the water, which, if we had not been there, would have been shot to pieces. Finding that it was useless to follow them, as they could easily keep out of our range, we turned back and very shortly we were again circling round our machine on the water.

"It was not long before the enemy again came very close to us, so we gave chase a second time. This time instead of five machines as before there were only four, and one small scout could be seen flying in the direction of Borkum. It was the fourth time that we went off in pursuit of the enemy that we suddenly discovered that a large number of hostile planes were proceeding toward us, not in the air with the other four planes, but very close to the water. There were ten planes in this first group, but they were joined a few minutes later by five more. The scouts were painted black, the two-seaters green, and seemed very hard to pick up. We swung into battle formation and steered for the middle of the group. When we were nearly within range, four planes on the port side and five on the starboard side rose to our level of 15,000 feet. Two planes passed directly beneath us firing upward. Firing was incessant from the beginning, and the air seemed blue with tracer smoke. I gave most of my time to the four planes on our port side because they were exactly on the same level with us and seemed

to be within good range, that is about two hundred yards. When we had passed each other, I looked around and noticed that Lieutenant Galvayne was in a stooping position, with head and one arm on his seat, the other arm hanging down as if reaching for something. I had seen him in this position earlier in the day so thought nothing of it. All this I had seen in the fraction of a second, for I had to continue firing. A few minutes later I turned around again, and found, with a shock, that Lieutenant Galvayne was in the same position. It was then that the first inkling of the truth dawned upon me. By bending lower I discovered that his head was lying in a pool of blood.

“From this time on I had no clear idea of just what our manœuvring was, but evidently we took up a running fight steering east, then circled until suddenly I found our machine had been cut off from the formation and we were surrounded by seven enemy seaplanes. This time we were steering west or more to the southwest. We carried on a running fight for ten miles or so, until we drove the seven planes off. One of them was driven down, and made a very poor landing. Another was badly hit, side-slipped, and crashed in flames from a height of 2,000 feet. During the last few minutes of the fight, our engine had been popping altogether too frequently, and soon the engineer came forward to tell us that the fourth engine petrol pipe had broken. By this time I had laid out Lieutenant Galvayne in the wireless cockpit, cleaned up the second pilot’s seat, and taken it myself.

“The engagement had lasted about half an hour,

and the closest range was one hundred yards, while the average range was two hundred. The boat with Ensign Eaton in it landed between the Islands of Texel and Vlieland, while the other boat, which had not taken any part in the fight, was last seen two miles off Vlieland. . . . We descended to the water at 5.45, ten miles northwest of Vlieland. During the ten minutes we were on the water, I loosened Lieutenant Galvanye's clothing, made his position somewhat easier, and felt for his heart, which, at that time, I was quite sure was beating feebly. When we rose from the water and ascended to 1,500 feet, we sighted two planes which later proved to be the two Yarmouth boats. We picked them up, swung into formation, and laid out a course for Yarmouth.

"At ten minutes to seven, we sighted land, and, twenty minutes after, we were resting on the water in front of Yarmouth slipway. We at once summoned medical aid but found that nothing could be done. The shot had gone through his head, striking the mouth and coming out behind this ear, tearing a gash of about two inches in diameter. The boat had been more or less riddled, a number of shots tearing up the top between the front cockpit and the beginning of the cowl. The total duration of the flight was seven hours and ten minutes."

Once again this is but a typical narrative—the story of an odd day's work by a tiny unit, and, ranged behind it, pressing for equal rights of mention, stand a multitude of others. Here, reluctantly, these must remain untold, but it was happy for the world that, in bonds such as these, the future leaders both

of Britain and America should have been growing up together. "There is one outstanding blessing," said Mr. Daniels, the Secretary of the United States navy, speaking at Springfield, Massachusetts, "which came to the world out of the tragedy of war, and that is the perfect coöperation, sympathy, and companionship between the British navy and the American. They are together now, and must forever be together in the resolve to protect what their valour won, and preserve alike for themselves and all the world complete freedom of the seas."

## CHAPTER XII

### THE HARVEST OF SEA POWER

**T**HE bombardment of Durazzo, mentioned in the last chapter, took place on October 2, 1918, and was the last offensive operation, on a large scale, undertaken by the Allied navies. During the fortnight preceding it, there had fallen to the Entente armies, in every theatre of war, such a series of victories as had never been witnessed in the recorded history of mankind. To the sea-borne and sea-fed armies in the Balkan Peninsula, Bulgaria had been the first of Germany's allies to make unconditional surrender; before the sea-borne and sea-fed armies in Syria—brought thither from Great Britain, from India, from Australia, and New Zealand—the last of Turkey's military power had melted like snow in summer; while, upon the Western Front, from the Flanders coast to the forest of the Woeuvre, the sea-borne and sea-fed British and American armies with their sea-equipped French comrades were surging forward, under Marshal Foch, in an irresistible tide.

The end was now apparent, though, at the last, it was to come with startling suddenness. Little by little, for fifty-two months, scarcely realized by the majority of their peoples, hardly realized even by the outside world, the Central Empires had been dying



of sea-hunger. Deprived, like prisoners in a closed chamber, of the oxygen necessary for life—the economic oxygen that could alone be drawn from the free oceans of the world, they had come to a point where the only choice lay between surrender and extinction.

Defeated at Jutland so decisively that, as their leaders well knew, those sea-windows could never be opened by the efforts of their surface ships, their campaign under water had failed with equal completeness. Beneath the Dover Barrage, the North Sea minefields, and the Straits of Otranto lay their dead submarines. Trapped by *Q* ships, rammed by destroyers, sunk by armed merchantmen, they had lost scores of others—more than two hundred in all had been put out of action by the Allied navies—while the spirit of admiralty that they had challenged, and the fringe of whose code they had been unable to grasp, had so ordered the ways of the world's free peoples that, even on land, they were reeling before them.

With that picture we might well close, since our thesis was but to show that, from Alfred the Great to Nelson, our dead admirals lived in their children. But the material harvest was still to be gathered, though the spiritual was already secure; and, in the reception by Vice-Admiral Gough-Calthorpe of the first Turkish Emissaries, in the landing at Ostend of Sir Roger Keyes, and in the figure of the First Sea Lord, Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, standing by Marshal Foch to receive the German delegates, there could be no mistaking, even by the blindest landsman, of all that an inspired sea-power had wrought. "But our

navy is undefeated," complained one of the German officers, listening to the terms of the armistice. "It had only to come out, sir," replied Admiral Wemyss; and worse than defeat lay in that reproach.

Fourteen clauses contained the naval conditions to be fulfilled under the terms of the armistice; and the total effect of these was to make it impossible for the war at sea to be renewed. All naval and mercantile marine prisoners were at once to be restored without reciprocity; all submarines in certain specified ports, capable of putting to sea, were to be handed over; six battle-cruisers, ten battleships, eight light cruisers, two mine-layers, and fifty destroyers were to be similarly yielded; and all other surface warships were to be paid off and completely disarmed. All mine-fields laid by Germany outside German territorial waters were to be indicated, and the Allies were to have the right of sweeping them up. Freedom of access to the Baltic, both to the Allied navies and their mercantile marines, was to be granted; but the blockade was to be continued, though the provisioning of Germany, if this should prove necessary, was contemplated. All naval aircraft were to be concentrated and immobilized at certain specified German bases. All merchant ships, tugs, lighters, cranes, and all marine stores in the Belgian ports were to be abandoned. The Black Sea ports were to be evacuated; and all the seized Russian warships were to be handed over to the Allies. All Allied merchant ships in German hands were to be restored in specified ports without reciprocity. There was to be no destruction of ships or material prior to evacuation,

surrender, or restoration. The German Government was further to notify all neutral nations that any restrictions imposed by it on their trading vessels, whether in return for concessions made or not, were immediately cancelled; and, after the signature, there were to be no transfers of German merchant shipping to any neutral flag. The naval terms presented to Austria-Hungary had been of a similar nature.

That was on November 11th, and already, in the east, the last act of the drama had begun. On November 9th, there drew in shore, opposite V beach on the Gallipoli Peninsula, a large transport and an old cruiser laden with British troops. Behind them, in the Straits, there plied industriously a great fleet of drifters and mine-sweepers, no longer under fire, and clearing a way through the minefields for the fleet that was to occupy the Sea of Marmora. Before them, a gray bulk, lay the *River Clyde*, beached as before and alone with her memories, and, on the hill above, stood a little group of Turkish artillerymen waiting to yield up the guns of Cape Helles. From these two transports, there presently put to shore, one on the Asiatic side, and one on V beach, two flat-bottomed barges each carrying 500 men. Such, without pomp, and almost in silence, was the second landing on Gallipoli Peninsula.

The next day, followed by the French destroyer *Mangini*, the youngest destroyer in the British navy—*le roi est mort, vive le roi*, the *Shark* had been lost at Jutland; this was the new one—anchored, the symbol of victory, off Constantinople; and, on November 13th, the British and French Fleets, led by

the flagship *Superb*, steamed to their anchorage. *Superb*, *Téméraire*, *Lord Nelson*, and *Agamemnon*—half the world's history lay in their names—they were followed by the cruisers and destroyer-flotillas of the British fleet of occupation. Behind them came a French squadron, followed in its turn by the Italian and Greek warships, the bulk of the fleets remaining in the Sea of Marmora, and only certain units entering the Bosphorus. The *Superb* and *Téméraire* anchored near the European shore, facing the Sultan's Palace and the Chamber of Deputies; astern of them lay the French, and, behind these again, the Italian and the Greek men-of-war. Every precaution against treachery had been taken, but this proved to be unnecessary; and, within the next two or three weeks, the whole of the Turkish Fleet and the battle-cruiser *Goeben* had been formally surrendered. With them, unseen, but none the less present, the German empire of the East had given up its sceptre.

Meanwhile, in the North Sea, two thousand miles away, more than that had laid down its arms; and there had begun off Harwich, on Wednesday, November 20th, the delivery into our hands of the German submarines. Conceived in sin, these had been foul from the beginning—they had never even been built but as instruments of murder—and it was perhaps fitting that they should be the first of the German Fleet to be handed over. Nor had any admiral earned a better right to receive them than Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt. Leaving by moonlight at 5 o'clock in the morning in his flagship the *Curacoa*, followed by the light cruisers *Dragon*, *Centaur*, *Coventry*, *Danaë*,

and an escort of destroyers, the leading German submarines were encountered at the appointed rendezvous soon after seven. This was at a spot thirty-five miles east of Harwich, all the British crews being at Action Stations, and the German submarines accompanied by two transports that were to take their crews back to Germany.

The first of these to appear through the mist was the ex-hospital ship *Sierra Ventana* followed by the *Titania*, succeeded in her turn by the long single file of the first detachment of twenty submarines. While Admiral Tyrwhitt advanced toward the end of the line, the cruiser *Dragon* was detached to lead the procession inshore, a couple of airships and three seaplanes passing and repassing overhead.

The next rendezvous was to be near Cutler's Buoy, some eight miles out of Harwich, where, from British destroyers, the crews were to be embarked that would take the submarines into harbour. These were met at about half-past ten, and there then ensued a scene of humiliation such as no great Power had ever passed through since men first went down to the sea in ships. Those of the Germans that were necessary to run the engines were to be retained at their posts, but the navigating crews for the twenty submarines were waiting in the *Melampus* and *Firedrake*. Strict orders had been issued that there were to be no demonstrations; and indeed it was rather with contempt—perhaps with a sort of amazed half-pity—that the British sailors took up their duties.

In each case the process was the same. The British officer who was to take command saluted as he



stepped aboard. The German officer, with his papers ready, met him, and handed these over for inspection. The German crew was then sent forward. The British navigating officer occupied the conning-tower, and the engineer-officer went below to superintend the working of the German engine-room ratings. Leaving the transports behind, and accompanied by destroyers, the twenty *U* boats, in groups of five, then proceeded up the channel of the Stour, passing between the gate-ships of the buoyed steel nets. As each came to anchorage just off Parkeston Quay, she was met by a motor-launch, into which her crew was disembarked; and these, amidst the silence of thousands of spectators, were conveyed to the destroyers that took them back to the transports. From beginning to end there was no demonstration of any kind; and none was to greet the remainder of the submarines—a hundred and twenty in all—that followed them. From shame to shame, blotting the seas, they passed without comment to their prison.

With equal truth that can be said of the procession that the next day was to witness, though here the note struck was one of a tragedy of which the surrendering *U* boats had been incapable. For, in the mighty ships of the High Seas Fleet—travesties though they had become, as instruments of admiralty—there had been, as the British navy felt, at least the possibilities of an honourable end. Proudly built, they dated from an era in which the *U* boat horror was still unimagined; and, in the hands of a Drake, could Germany have produced one, they might have postponed surrender and gone down in glory. Materially as

they had recovered, however, from their defeat at Jutland, from the moral reverse they had never looked up; and the disintegration had been completed by Germany's own submarine policy. Lacking a soul, the body had died; and, to many who witnessed that procession of corpses, there was a sense of almost personal indecency at presiding over such a ceremony.

It was a quarter to four in the morning of November 21st when the Grand Fleet began to get under way to form the two mighty and moving walls between which the Germans were to approach the Firth of Forth; and the advanced destroyer-flotillas and light cruisers had set out for the rendezvous the night before. For ten days the North Sea had been shrouded in a thick mist, but, as the sun rose, the clouds blew off, and the sea lay clear and white-feathered. Later, and at different places along the hundred miles or so occupied by the parallel lines of the Grand Fleet, the mists were to triumph again, but only half-heartedly, and with the sun soon re-asserting itself.

Six miles separated the two lines, and at half-past eight they went to Action Stations, the leading ships of the High Seas Fleet having been picked up an hour before by the easternmost British units. Directing the whole operation—directing, at that moment, the vastest fleet that this planet had seen—Admiral Beatty, in his flagship the *Queen Elizabeth*, had taken his position in the northern line, his second-in-command, Admiral Sir Charles Madden, leading the southern-line battleships in the *Revenge*. Guiding the

Germans, in the light cruiser *Cardiff*, was Rear-Admiral Alexander-Sinclair.

Of the promised total, one light cruiser, the *Köln*, had broken down and had had to turn back, and one destroyer had struck a mine, going to the bottom, though her crew had been rescued; but, behind the *Cardiff*, in a slow series, moved what had been the cream of the world's second navy. Led by the Battle-Cruiser Squadron, the *Hindenburg*, *Derfflinger*, *Seydlitz*, *Moltke*, and *von der Tann*, came the battleships *Friedrich der Grosse*, flying the German Rear-Admiral's flag, the *Bayern*, *Grosser Kurfürst*, *Kronprinz Wilhelm*, *Markgraf*, *Kaiserin*, *König Albrecht*, *Prinz Regent Luitpold*, and *Kaiser*. Behind these again steamed the six light cruisers, *Karlsruhe*, *Frankfurt*, *Emden*, *Nürnberg*, *Brummer*, and *Bremen*; and, bringing up the rear, steaming in five lines, and sandwiched between British escorts, were the remaining forty-nine destroyers of the fifty that had been demanded under the terms of the armistice.

So they steamed on, docile to every order, and, when the last of them had been deeply contained, Admiral Beatty gave the signal for the right-about-turn of the Grand Fleet. Surrounded on all sides, filthy, as was afterward to be discovered, and with their men abject and undisciplined, before they reached their anchorage near Inchkeith Island, Admiral Beatty had issued the following order: "The German flag is to be hauled down," he said, "at 3.57 to-day, and is not to be hoisted again without permission." That was at sunset; and, a moment after, Germany had ceased, even in name, to be a sea power.

So ends our chronicle, for, though there was still work to be done, the navy's long vigil was at an end. Far to the north, it was true, the converted merchantmen of the unsung Tenth Squadron still held to their task—still patiently examined, as month after month, in all kinds of weather, they had been stopping and examining, such innocent-seeming ships as, to their experienced eyes, might be blockade-runners. But the main task was over—the shouldering of the armies' burdens that had never ceased for one moment, the endless battle, with the world for its theatre, that it had waged for four and a quarter years. From President Wilson to the Sheriff of Mecca, it had been the good servant of all; and now, with its duty well and truly done, a certain quiet satisfaction might be permitted. There was no fear of this being too exuberant—as a corporate body, the navy was not that. It would rather rejoice in the general spirit of Admiral Tyrwhitt's advice to his men on Armistice Day. Exhorting them to be as cool in peace as they had been in war, and to return to their ships in good order, he concluded by informing them that, in the evening, an extra tot of rum would be served.

Let that be the excuse for a last word. We have been tempted to suggest that the war was won by sea power. We were wrong. It was won by sailors—equally of the mercantile marine as of the navy. From Coronel to Kiao-Chao, from Archangel to Cocos-Keeling, no less in Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes, stumbling through a Turkish farmyard, than in Admiral Jellicoe at Whitehall, no less in Lieutenant Brown, trying to salve the *Wellington*, than in Sir

David Beatty directing the Grand Fleet, it was the men that triumphed, by virtue of the spirit in them, and the great traditions that they had inherited—to be handed on in turn, as it had been handed down to themselves by Raleigh and Blake, Collingwood and Nelson.





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Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: MAY 2001

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